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ПОДПОЛЬНЫЕ МИЛЛИОНЕРЫ

вся правда
о частном бизнесе в СССР

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FROM THE AUTHOR

I had never come across such people before. Coming out of the underground passage on Pushkinskaya Square, I saw a bunch of strange characters with homemade posters "Withdraw the army from Chechnya!", "Let all imperial dreams die!", "Don't make Ingushetia a second Chechnya!" and the like.

In front of these rather poorly dressed people stood several men in good suits and jackets. One of them conscientiously filmed everything that happened on a video camera. "What are these, FSB people, or what?" I wondered. One of those whom I was supposed to meet was in the exact same group, which was filmed by a man in civilian clothes. It's not that I'm very scared

lo, but introduced some intrigue into the plot.

During this time, I worked for the Russian edition of Forbes magazine. We were preparing another issue with the rating of the richest entrepreneurs. For him, it was decided to prepare historical material about people who were doing business in the Soviet Union - speculators, tsekhoviks (owners of underground industries) and other bigwigs. I was instructed to prepare the article.

The idea seemed to be winning - that in the USSR there was an underground business, many heard. And already

everyone definitely remembers Comrade Saakhov from The Prisoner of the Caucasus and the ominous "boss" from The Diamond Arm. The idea was to find real prototypes of these characters, to communicate with them. To write about their business, destinies, lifestyle. In general, it all looked tempting - just in the style of Forbes, moderately glamorous and slightly provocative.

Starting to study the issue, I soon found out that the person I needed was Viktor Sokirko. No, he did not sew jeans in the basement and did not engage in speculation. At the end of Soviet power, he received his term under a completely different article - for criticizing the existing order at that time and samizdat publications. Then, during perestroika, Sokirko, like other dissidents, actively participated in social and political life. In 1989, he created the Society for the Protection of Convicted Business Executives and Economic Freedoms, a public organization that was supposed to review the cases of convicts on economic

mic articles.

In total, several hundred cases passed through the society. For many of them, Viktor Sokirko managed to get a review of the sentences. If anyone has materials on the cases of Soviet entrepreneurs, it is he, I suggested, and contacted the former dissident. So Kirko offered to meet at Pushkin Square. He said that he was there every week, on Thursdays. And he added: "We have a picket there." To be honest, I did not attach much importance to these words.

And now it turns out that Sokirko is not even a former dissident at all. Looking ahead, I will say that several months after our meeting, Victor

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Vladimirovich was arrested on the same Pushkin Square. They say that he violated the rules for holding a public event - he declared one number of participants, but many more came (which is not surprising - the picket was held in protest against the murder of well-known human rights activist Natalia Estemirova that had just happened in Grozny). 70-year-old Viktor Sokirko was tied up by riot police and pushed into a police bus. Released only a few days later.

Well, then I went up to some long time unshaven to a peasant holding a cardboard box with something like "Putin resign!" in his hands, and asked if Viktor So Kirko was here. I was pointed to an elderly man. I came up and introduced myself. We talked. Viktor Vladimirovich offered to drive up to his house. View archival materials. A couple of days later I was already in his three-room apartment in Maryino, crammed with piles of papers and books. There, sorting through the old archives of the Society for the Protection of Convicted Business Executives, I actually managed to find what I needed. And about "fate", and about "business". Then I found a couple more sources. I spoke with several shopkeepers. My colleague Anya Sokolova, with whom we worked together on the text, interviewed retired obkhaesniks. And we wrote a cheerful article.

However, as a result of this whole story, I have a feeling of understatement. Digging through the materials of criminal cases thirty or forty years ago, I often caught myself thinking that all these stories have not lost their relevance today. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, what do we know about the country in which

Did we ourselves or our parents live only a few decades ago? About the "heroes" and "anti-heroes" of that era? About the real reality that hides under the lacquered industrial TV novels and the crackling propaganda of Soviet newspapers? Which is hidden behind the facade of society, where at first glance everything is controlled and everything belongs to the State with a capital letter?

It's worth more than an entertaining article in a semi-glossy magazine. This is worth looking into. For starters, just do it yourself.

1.

Let's go back 40 years. Industry, agriculture, trade - everything is in the hands of the state. Soviet plants and factories are managed by directors appointed by the branch heads. Prices for goods are determined by the State Planning Committee. He, by his directives, appoints the routes of commodity flows - to which enterprise how much and what to supply. Gosplan is

tens of thousands of estimators, planners, economists.

They seem to know everything. But in fact, the information that this machine grinds and the current state of affairs in enterprises and industries are two different realities. Bottom line: production chains in the industry are barely able to function due to the irregularity of supplies from subcontractors. The shops are empty. Agriculture, where government money is pumped and pumped, suffers from a shortage of the most necessary materials, that

same boards.

And then there are "pushers", "guild workers", "speculators" are people driven by entrepreneurship and initiative. They provide the clumsy, unbalanced mechanism of the Soviet economy with the "lubrication" that allows it to function at least somehow.

The pushers, and not the State Planning Commission, organize the delivery of the right amount of components from subcontractors at the right time. Guild workers use defective raw materials, or even materials simply stolen

from Soviet production, to manufacture goods demanded by the population - shoes, clothes and other consumer goods. Speculators, reducing the acuteness of supply problems, ensure supplies of deficit.

Who are these people whose activities gave the Soviet economic system at least a minimal degree of flexibility? Perhaps they can be called before the hosts. They took risks, they schemed, they made money. Their activities formed a whole sector of the Soviet economy, the so called shadow economy. According to estimates - up to 10% of the official. And if we take into account that almost half of the Soviet official economy worked for the defense industry, it turns out that private traders provided every fifth ruble of the Soviet "peaceful" GDP.

Considering that hardly not half of the Soviet official economy worked for the defense industry it turns out that the private provided each fifth ruble of the Soviet "peaceful" GDP.

How many were there? Despite the official ban on entrepreneurship, almost all Soviet citizens earned their living privately. You

grow potatoes in their backyards. Rabbits were bred and handed over to the state. Sabbaths at construction sites. Sewing bags. But there were, of course, fewer real entrepreneurs, those who earned money and were not engaged in self-sufficiency. Probably, at best, several million people for the entire Union.

The most amazing thing is that they were, despite government repression. Despite the intolerance and condescending attitude cultivated in society. These people were. Otherwise, where would the manuscript written in the colony by Mark Sherman, the Soviet "trader" as he called himself, come from in the archives of the "Society for the Protection of Convicted Businessmen"?

2.

Here is just one of the brightest episodes from Sherman's manuscript. sixties of the last century. Transit prison in Ust-Labinsk. A party of prisoners, freshly arrived from the stage. In the corridor they are stretched into a line: "Undress! Naked! Sidor in front of you! The prison is old. The corridor is in the women's section. The women look through the cracks from the cells and squeal with happiness ... The guards gut the sacks. Photos of those who have, with children, mothers, wives, sisters, relatives - are torn and immediately thrown on the floor. Those who twitch to collect the scraps are beaten.

"Step back!" Stepped back. "Sit down! Get up! Sit down! Get up! Bend over!" They look at the "point" - or "gnus" according to prison science. Then they go in front. "From rolling!" They look to see if they are wearing anything on the penis. "Ga

From the author

bags! Fast, fast! Get dressed in the cells!" Prisoner Mark Sherman, along with the others, was shoved into the cell. There are fifteen people inside. Solid racks in two tiers, in the shape of the letter "P". The newcomers settled in. Have settled down. The people got tired and fell asleep. However, at night Sherman woke up - from below was heard

some kind of fuss.

"Brothers, give me a smoke before death!" - someone wheezed. Sherman sat on the bunk and looked around. Opposite, on the lower tier, a man was strangled with a towel. Overwhelmed around the neck, and the ends - at two guys. One pulls on one side, the other pulls on the other.

Doomed, sitting between them, took a deep drag. A red light dispersed the darkness. Facial features became visible. Sherman took a closer look and recognized - Nikola Sochinsky! He was a witness at the camp court. The thieves condemned him. And here, in transit, they caught up. The sentence is carried out. The poor fellow finished his cigarette, threw a cigarette butt. Each of the guys rested his foot on his shoulder, pulled on a towel. The man huddled in the noose, groaned, sang, rolled his legs. A third jumped up, carrying a wooden dustpan. "Bitch! Paskuda! Still twitching. You can't die like a man!" Angrily, he began slamming the shovel into his legs. Nikola twitched a few more times, fell silent. He was covered with a blanket until the morning.

In the morning one of the prisoners in the line took a step forward. Not one of those who choked, but the other - "Chief, remove the corpse. I killed a man." The corpse was taken away, the prisoner, having broken his hands, was taken somewhere. Then they gave me three years.

At first, Sherman often recalled that first murder he saw. And then I got used to it. But this cry

"Bitch! ... Still twitching!" and the sound of a piece of wood hitting a bone, I could not forget until the very end. Like that convict c de with a wooden scoop, the Soviet state beat Sherman all his life on the head, arms and legs. And with the voices of investigators, prosecutors, judges, camp authorities, they said: "Where are you going?! Sit tight! How can a person not die?"

Repeatedly convicted, recidivist Sherman spent more than 20 years in prison. For what? "I was looking for goods, materials, components. I was looking for a manufacturer. I was looking for a buyer. I worked. I am an intermediary. In setting up commodity firms in the country, I will be a broker," Mark Sherman wrote in a letter from the colony in 1990, while serving his third term. Ten years earlier, he bombarded the authorities with letters and judicial appeals, arguing that his activities were not

damaged the Soviet economy. To no avail! "They laugh at us, mock us. The term was counted correctly... And they don't let you move your legs. They beat..." Sherman wrote from prison.

He received 12 years in prison for organizing the supply of boards and timber from Siberian logging enterprises to state farms in Siberia and the Kazakh SSR. In addition to timber, Sherman was engaged in the supply of wire, tractors, iron sheets, pipes, and cement. The creaking and thoroughly rusty mechanism of the Soviet planned economy simply could not provide the right amount of needed goods in the right place. And then Sherman showed up. State farms received timber, and Sherman received another term.

Mark Sherman was not alone. He had partners. He found among the same as him, businessmen,

From the author

counterparties. What motivated these people? Just a thirst for profit? Or something more?

Probably not just money. The spirit of entrepreneurship is not only about "grandmothers". It is also about the desire for independence. I crave activity. Unwillingness to carry out meaningless orders of superiors. Even in Soviet society, which was pretty much covered in civil war, Stalinist terror, collectivization, dispossession of kulaks and other experiments of power,

year after year there were people
willing to take risks in order to
live with dignity and
independence. And paid for this
many destinies, great
wow, life...

Even in the Soviet
society were
people inclined
take risks to live
worthy and independent.
And paid for it
broken destinies,
health, life...

"The shadow economy... This is what our economy breathes, works and produces today. This is the lubricant of centralized planning and economic relations. Take it away - everything will fall into place in the country. What should be done? Legalize, abolish criminality and criminal punishment. Allow this activity in daylight. That's all. We must finally understand that no buying and selling can ever be replaced by the most ideal system of logistics. Because you can't issue instructions just in case of economic relations and you can't foresee them. Stop festering initiative people in prisons. For the country, this is a oh-so-very expensive pleasure," wrote Soviet broker Mark Sherman in December 1990.

3.

Well, who's on the other side? Sherman died in 1994. And Vladimir Dorofeev, the man who during his career in the OBKhSS sent dozens of people like Sherman to camps, and some to the wall, is alive. He has a small dacha in the suburbs, not far from the railway station. Fifteen-year-old "Volga", a hefty male German Shepherd. Leaving the dog to look after the guests, Dorofeev shuffles off into the next room. There, the retired head of the department of the operational-search unit of the OBKhSS has an archive. Dorofeev returns with a plump folder. Brushing off the dust,

yellowed typewritten and handwritten sheets, diagrams. Expands the map, runs a finger along the arrows and conditional icons drawn in bold red. This is Dorofeev's "favorite" work.

We worked on a mountain, almost a kilometer from the village," he recalls. The SS officers had a post there with an army rangefinder. From there, vigilant monitoring of the "object" located in the village of Apsua, now in Karachay-Cherkessia, was carried out. Several people were hired as day laborers at the local collective farm and every day they went out with hoes to the fields adjoining the aul. In addition, while they were equipped with walkie-talkies, they reported numbers
all cars entering and exiting the populated

item. Among the inhabitants of the village there were recruited agents who regularly supplied the OBKhSS with fresh data. Some "knocked" on relatives.

Finally, the X-day came. The object was left by a car with a particularly large consignment. The truck was traced to Krasnodar, where the goods were handed over and paid for

From the author

customer. At the moment of giving money to the premises policemen rushed. Are several people stood.

On the same day, investigators raided the village, accompanied by waiting for a platoon of machine gunners.

The owner, a certain Dadunashvili, tried to hide. He jumped into the

Volga and gave it a gas. Leaving the chase, he tried to get rid of the evidence and feverishly threw money out the window. Of course, we collected them later, - Dorofeev laughs contentedly.

Dorofeev's heirs, for whom

entrepreneur -

it's just for

no chance yet

sat down speculator, still

run

affairs in the organs.

In total, he then arrested more than a dozen people. But for what? What was happening in the village, for which it was necessary to carry out an entire police operation, to involve a unit of one of the Soviet special services? Was there a drug factory located there? Made weapons? Of course not. They just sewed ... They sewed raincoats and jackets. Then they were sold in the markets of Stavropol, Pyatigorsk and other cities of the North Caucasus. Two dozen seamstresses from clandestine production became witnesses. Several of the organizers received lengthy prison terms.

The question of whether his then actions were excessively cruel does not even occur to Dorofeev. He is still firmly convinced that he was engaged in a just cause, persecuting speculators and rascals. The shop workers arrested by him did not just steal raw materials, but made things useful and necessary for people from it, making up for the total deficit of the Soviet economy? Retired OBHSS officer and hear this

he doesn't want to. He seemed to be stuck in the early 80s, in Andropov's times of tightening slightly loosened screws. And he is far from alone. Dorofeev's heirs, for whom an entrepreneur is just a speculator who has not yet sat down by chance, still manage affairs in the bodies.

4.

Sherman was released from prison in 1991. Three years later he died of cancer. If he had been born thirty years later, he might have been able to create a large company. Build a successful business. I would be on the Forbes list of billionaires.

But in reality, the talent, energy and vitality of Mark Sherman, like hundreds of thousands of his kind, were wasted on fighting the Soviet system and adapting to the bestial conditions of the camps. "There is no copy, no time to read and correct errors. It is, as they say, "on wheels," Sherman wrote of his manuscript sent from the colony. — But this will be the starting material for a future book. Which will help me to write. Who wants to..."

The modern Russian economy, albeit in a distorted form, functions on the principles of the market and free pricing. Results? Full shelves of shops, supermarkets, availability of any product or service. Many today believe that this has always been the case. The USSR is like now, only everything is cheap, that's what people have in their heads. Many who grew up in the 90s or 2000s cannot imagine how you can get a real term (five or even ten years

From the author

colonies), simply for buying and reselling a commodity. For being smart and earning money.

Today people are nostalgic for Soviet times. When there was "order" and vodka for "three sixty-two". When everyone lived "honestly" and did not "steal". The

past always looks more attractive than the present. But there is no greater danger for society than to succumb to the charms of a bygone era and manipulators exploiting nostalgia. Entrepreneurship, initiative, freedom - this was not the case in the USSR. This is not enough today. But it is there, and in order not to stifle these weak shoots, one must know how it was before. And what is the price of that real Soviet reality. The new apologists for the "hard hand", the lovers of the "state", which "takes care of everyone", are trying to present it as a worthy goal, having prettily decorated it.

Modern Russian economy, let and in a distorted form, but it functions on the principles market and free pricing.

And that's another reason to read this book. It would seem, who today should be interested in whether business existed or did not exist in the USSR? And what was that business? After all, life has changed radically. It seems to be governed by very different laws. And in any case, you will say, the economy of modern Russia is built on completely different principles than the planned, socialist economy of the USSR.

However, every time I asked these questions, I had a clear answer to them. No! This is wrong. Life, of course, has changed, but not so much for the sake of cal.

You say we have democracy and the CPSU is long gone? I will answer - "United Russia" today is a noticeably mutated, but very similar to its prototype clone of the late Soviet Communist Party. And Viktor Sokirko, who once tried to rehabilitate those convicted under economic articles, did not in vain again become a dissident.

sident.

Do we have a market economy? This is wrong. The authorities, without a moment's hesitation, are ready to use the manual control levers. Over the past ten years, the state has regained its dominant position in the economy. Right of private property? In today's Russia, this seems to be an empty phrase. And entrepreneurs, the most active and productive part of society, today, like thirty or forty years ago,

Not for society
greater danger than
succumb to charm
bygone era
and operating
nostalgia
manipulators.

are in the "down" position.
zu". "Above" - officials of all stripes.
Police, FSB,
prosecutors, firefighters...

So, you can say

that this book is about modernity. About how business works and what degenerates into, forced to exist in conditions of lawlessness and outside the law. When the well-being of the entrepreneur rests on the illusory hope that loyalty to the system

we can be bought with a bribe.

But this book is not about embezzlers of socialist property, thieves, guild workers and speculators. All those who in the days of the USSR were considered carriers of a class-alien private property ideology. Already something, but the goal is to sculpt romantic forests out of them

tsov for economic freedoms and I had no opponents of a totalitarian state. They weren't heroes. They simply could not live differently.

Everything that is written here is about people whose energy, passion, enterprise, willingness to take risks and the ability to earn money pushed them into semi-legal conditions. existence. And about how the system worked, in which hundreds of thousands of citizens were engaged in productive, albeit illegal activities. A comparable number of officials of all stripes fed from this. And the state machine hypocritically, but periodically - with diabolical efficiency, struggled with the most enterprising part of society.

State

machine hypocritically, but periodically - with a diabolical efficiency, struggled with the most enterprising part of society.

It's so familiar to us today, isn't it?

CHAPTER I

Every third Soviet ruble

According to the latest polls, the majority of Russian students would like to go into civil service after graduating from their universities. Being an official in the eyes of the younger generation is more attractive than starting your own business.

On the one hand, this is understandable. Your business requires constant care. You can't leave him and go on vacation. You can't quit from there. But at the same time, where else can one find the opportunity to become a truly free person? Depending only on yourself, your talent, abilities?

The choice is difficult. The fact that not everyone is ready to trade a predictable career in the civil service or in a large corporation for the uncertain fate of an entrepreneur is by no means an exclusively Russian phenomenon. In the US and Europe, too, not everyone owns their own business. In the current Russian situation, something else is depressing - the dynamics. About ten years ago, there were much more barking people who wanted to go on their own.

Some, however, are even ready to assert that, they say, the passion for entrepreneurship that woke up among the masses in the dashing 90s is an opportunistic phenomenon. There was nothing to live on, so the people went to trade in the markets. And this,

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probably true to a large extent. But what is really surprising is the speed of adaptation of the majority of the population to new conditions. To the market, free trade, the opportunity to open your own business.

It is surprising if you do not know that even in the conditions of the USSR, tens of millions of people were involved in private entrepreneurial activity. At a time when this occupation was officially considered not only reprehensible, but a matter of jurisdiction.

... Mentally ill fanatics without mind and imagination judged us. Able, thinking, producing. They judged. The creators were judged!

Member of the regional people's court Abil Akopyanovich Krikbaev, calling me a loafer, a swindler, a grabber, asked:

— What were you, Sherman, doing there?

"I worked," I say. "If I hadn't done anything, the sawn timber would not have come to the state farm.

- You're lying, Sherman! Sit down!

This is him to me. Well, what can I say? The man knows what he's doing...

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

1.

Around 1985, a major change took place in our lives. My father, a leading engineer at a military design bureau that developed anti-tank missiles, portable anti-aircraft systems and other miracle weapons, finally bought a sidecar for a motorcycle. Our two-cylinder "izhak", where with sin in half, but we could sit down four of us, the whole family - I'm on the tank, dad is driving, mom is in the back, and my brother is between them -

transformed from a passenger vehicle to a cargo vehicle.

The father assembled a frame from boards and installed it on the stroller instead of the cradle where the passenger should sit. On the resulting cargo platform, it was possible to transport 200 kilograms of cargo. In our case, freshly cut grass or hay. By that time, we had once led rabbits, which, as you know, provide not only valuable fur, but also three or four kilograms of dietary

meat.

Why would a budding young specialist from one of the leading military-industrial enterprises bother with all sorts of nonsense? What are rabbits? The answer is simple - in our hometown of Kolomna, meat of the year has ceased to be found in stores since the 80th. Should I follow him to Moscow? We tried. And those who pushed themselves at the Kazansky railway station, along with the seething crowd, into a sleazy "Ryazan" six-hour electric train will understand me if I say that this is by no means an easy matter.

Living on a semi-subsistence economy was noticeably easier. Especially since the parents, not waiting for an apartment in Kolomna, bought a private house and moved to one of the suburbs.

After the rabbits came chickens. Then a couple of pigs, goats. We still cut the hay ourselves. But where to get the rest of the food? Potatoes, fodder beets, mixed fodder, grain? Theoretically, probably, there were also legal ways. But in practice, we talked with the peasants from the local state farm, who were ready to get almost anything for a bottle. And they got it.

The "cucumber campaign" became the peak of our agricultural activity. Three or four years under a row we occupied half the plot with cucumbers, salted

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harvest (it turned out two 100-liter barrels) and then on New Year's Eve they sold pickles at the Riga market in Moscow. Not that it brings in a lot of money. But making ends meet helped.

All this happened, I recall, in the mid-80s. Perestroika may have already begun, but somehow it has not reached us yet. The Soviet Union was strong. Speculation and other types of unearned income were officially condemned in every possible way. On people who look like private traders, i.e. engaged in independent economic activity - the authorities looked with an unkind squint. But I am saying this today, knowing that and how, in hindsight, mainly from specialized literature. And then, in the 80's, there's nothing wrong with us

did, I didn't notice.

Parents understood that all this private enterprise was doubtful from the point of view of official morality, but this topic was not discussed in our presence. But I remember something else. My father always said that one should not hope for one's native state. He won't, and that's fine. And if you want to earn money, work yourself. He worked. He earned us bread, clothes, construction

housekeeping.

2.

The funny thing is that the Soviet state eradicated the private property instinct for almost seventy years, but as a result it did not succeed. Perhaps because, with a constantly declared negative attitude towards private business activity, the boundaries

allowed were constantly changing.

BUSINESS IN THE USSR

...I'm sorry, but I have to lie. Lies dominate in us always and in everything. And the events of 1717 laid the foundation for this process. Initially, we took the path against the natural. Trying to depict a car from an ancient cart, we attached a wheel from a cart to the car. We said white to black and vice versa. All our development is some sort of leaps. Extremes and shyness. But

we have given and are giving out the development of the country as planned and allegedly historical.

Socialized socialism cannot be commodity-producing. At one time we killed the main thing - free commodity producers. And since it is public, there are no specific culprits. And the deliberate lies and guilt for it were called mistakes. 73 years was a bad game. But with a bad game, we made a smart face. Thus, a lie gave birth to a lie. The further, the more. We are made of lies and contradictions. Sheer antagonism...

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

With the first decrees, the Soviet government nationalized banks, plants and factories. During the civil war, the Cheka rounded up speculators, the commissars tried to build "war communism", carried out the nationalization of wholesale and, in general, all large-scale trade. But at the same time, flea markets and small private businesses were de facto allowed. Next came the NEP. Whether it was a forced retreat, a tactical maneuver, is not so important. The entrepreneurial initiative was released from the underground for almost a decade.

Further? Stalin won the fight for power in the Soviet elite, the NEP was curtailed. Indu-

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strialization and collectivization. It would seem that private business should have been eliminated, and those who were engaged - polls from directed to dig channels. But no... In the Stalinist decades, the so-called handicraftsmen and their artels flourished in the USSR, to put it in simple terms - all sorts of small and very small businesses. What, in the light of the established opinion about the USSR 30-

50s as a totalitarian state, ruthlessly suppressing any sprouts of independence and dissent (in the economy, politics, art), looks somewhat unexpected. But the fact remains that in the late 40s - early 50s, various kinds of small

hundreds of you were engaged in private business thousands, if not millions of people.

Of course, handicraftsmen, as a class alien and a priori dubious element, were under the watchful eye of the organs. But commands for total liquidation

this layer never arrived.

Moreover, "in the post-war period there was a surge in entrepreneurial activity, the people sewed and dressed themselves," says Leon Kosals, professor at the Higher School of Economics, author of several studies on the shadow economy of the USSR and Russia. After the war, the Soviet economy lay in ruins. The arms race that had begun demanded an accelerated restoration of heavy industry, which was devouring all the available resources of the state. The authorities, of necessity, resigned themselves to the existence of

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large private sector in the economy. By the end of the 50s of the last century, about 150,000 artels (cooperatives) and private handicraftsmen were registered in the USSR.

Artels had to work using the waste products of large enterprises. Such, at least, was the official justification for the existence of this form of organization of production. But behind this "screen" were hiding ordinary small enterprises - workshops for tailoring clothes, dressing shoes, etc.

Naturally, they worked not only on waste. Sewing artels, for example, who needed high-quality rubber tape, obtained it from the aviation industry, which it

stood out among other materials for the production of parachutes. In many cases, artels existed directly at the "donor" factories, through which their supply was established. follow the dozens

By the end of the 50s last century in the USSR was registered 150,000 thousand artels (cooperatives) and private handicraftsmen.

thousands of small industries across the country was simply unrealistic. As a result, entire sectors and industries functioned outside the legal, official economy. mindset.

3.

On the scale of illegal economic activities The events of that period can be judged from the case of the so-called Department of Military Development No. 1 (UVS-1). In fact, it was a real private construction corporation.

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a walkie-talkie with a staff of under a thousand people, who worked throughout the European part of the USSR.

Its head and owner, Nikolai Pavlenko, was born in the village of Novye Sokoly near Kiev in a miller's family, where, besides him, there were seven more children. In 1928, he ran away from home, forging his birth papers. Soon the family was dispossessed and exiled to Siberia. And Nikolai Pavlenko moved to Kalinin (today Tver), where he entered the local civil engineering institute. I studied there for two years, then quit and got a job at a construction site.

It is no longer possible to restore the further life path of Pavlenko in details. It remains only to follow the investigators who were able to identify some of the episodes. For example, in the archives of the NKVD, reports dated to the end of the 30s were found from some Curzon and Sakhno, with the decision to involve Pavlenko "in the development of materials against the Trotskyists Volkov and Afanasyev." That is, it seems that the miller's son was actively scribbling denunciations and slanders against the people with whom he worked at the construction site. The recommendation of the Kalinin bodies of the NKDV on the employment of Pavlenko in a serious organization "Glavvoenstroy" has also been preserved. There he worked until the war - foreman, senior foreman, for the leading construction site. I learned to "work with documents", I understood how the "machine" works.

With the outbreak of the war, Pavlenko was drafted into the active army. However, in October 1941, having issued forged documents for himself, he left the unit and, together with a group of the same deserters, moved to Kalinin. There he set up his first business. One of the deserters who joined the group made a rubber

on the soles of the boot, a seal with the inscription "Sector of military construction work of the Kalinin Front" ("UVSR 5"). For a bribe, the necessary documents were printed in the printing house - invoices, orders, contracts, etc. On the frontline roads, Pavlenko picked up about a dozen abandoned trucks and bulldozers. After that, he managed to integrate into the system of military construction units of the Kalinin Front.

The "private" unit was put on allowance. The military registration and enlistment offices sent Pavlenko reinforcements from among recruits and fighters discharged from hospitals. And the overgrown part repaired roads, repaired bridges, built airfields and hospitals. Changing names and subordination, the construction unit of Pavlenko moved westward along with the front. Clashed several times

with armed groups of Germans who found themselves in the rear of the Soviet troops. And all four years of the war, part of Pavlenko was loaded with work, stood on all types of allowances.

Was Pavlenko the only such private contractor of the Soviet army, or just the largest of those identified? It's hard to say today. But at least he really built. And there were no complaints about his work from customers. Pavlenko ended the war near Berlin. Already after the Victory, having agreed for a bribe with the military representatives of the Department of Clothing and Carriage Supply of the USSR Ministry of Defense and representatives of the temporary military commandant's office of Stuttgart, Pavlenko received at his disposal a train train of trains

tsati wagons.

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It was loaded with tens of tons of flour, sugar and cereals, requisitioned from the local population. A couple hundred heads of livestock. Ten trucks, five tractors, several cars and other equipment. Having delivered all this to Kalinin and sold it on the "black" market, Pavlenko demobilized most of his unit. He paid each of the rank and file from 7 to 12 thousand rubles. Officers - from 15 to 25 thousand. As the investigation later established, he left about 90,000 rubles for himself.

Retaining for himself a part of the equipment exported from Germany, Pavlenko organized in Kalinin a civil construction artel "Plandorstroy". For some time he worked at its base. However, here, in the central region, there was too tight control, and it was impossible to turn around. Pavlenko moved to Lvov. Most of his former subordinates also gathered there. A new structure was created - the First Directorate of Military Development or UVS-1. It soon grew into one of the largest construction companies in the region.

The headquarters of the unit was located in Chisinau, it had his banner with a permanent sentry on duty, armed guards around the perimeter. The personnel came from local military registration and enlistment offices. Contracts - from industrial enterprises and organizations of Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, the western regions of the RSFSR and the Baltic states. UVS-1 simultaneously carried out work on dozens of sites, Pavlenko built to last.

One of the investigators who worked on the Pavlenko case later recalled : "In the city of Zdolbunov (Rivne region of the Ukrainian SSR. - *M.K.*) silt access roads to the restored cement

and brick factories. I must say, he built it personally. He invited specialists from the outside, under contracts. He paid in cash three to four times more than at a state-owned enterprise. He came to check the work himself. If he finds flaws, he will not leave until they are corrected. After the rollback of the track, he presented the workers with several barrels of beer and a snack for free, and personally handed the award to the locomotive driver and his assistant, here, publicly.

Probably, sooner or later, Pavlenko's "corporation" would have been revealed - its activities have gained too much scope. From 1948 to 1952, UVS-1 concluded sixty-four contracts for the amount of 38,717,600 rubles on false documents. Almost half of the contracts passed through the Ministry of Coal Industry of the USSR. Pavlenko opened current accounts in twenty-one divisions of the State Bank, through which he received more than 25 million rubles on fictitious accounts. From this money, he paid bribes to almost all of his counterparties. Well "oiled" mechanism worked without failures.

However, in 1952, everything was decided by chance. Pavlenko, having decided to make a completely ordinary Soviet organization out of his part, signed his employees for government bonds (they were bought illegally on the "black" market in Lvov). One of the soldiers, having received papers for a smaller amount than was paid for, wrote a statement to the local prosecutor's office. The check began. In its course, it quickly became clear that UVS 1 is not officially listed anywhere! Not in the armed forces, not in the Ministry of the Interior. Nowhere.

A carefully planned operation was carried out to liquidate Pavlenko's business. November 14, 1952

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At the same time, investigators, reinforced by armed support units, raided the headquarters of UVS-1 and its entire unit at the same time. However, they met no resistance. In total, more than 300 people were detained, including about 50 so-called officers, sergeants and privates from Pavlenko's inner circle, who were aware of the illegal nature of UVS-1's activities. Nikolai Pavlenko himself was also arrested, who by that time had assumed the rank of colonel.

During searches in UVS-1, 3 light machine guns, 8 assault rifles, 25 rifles and carbines, 18 pistols, 5 grenades, over 3 thousand live cartridges, 62 trucks and 6 cars, 4 tractors, 3 excavators were found and seized. and a bulldozer, round seals and stamps, tens of thousands of different forms, a lot of fake identity cards and registration certificates.

The trial took place two years later. Pavlenko and his 16 accomplices were charged with creating a counter-revolutionary organization, undermining state industry and anti-Soviet agitation. "I never set out to create an anti-Soviet organization," Pavlenko said in his last speech. He assured that he was only engaged in construction. And he built well. "I assure the court that Pavlenko can still be useful..." - "Colonel" was counting on indulgence in exchange for a promise to work in the future only for the state. However, the verdict of the tribunal of the Moscow Military District on April 4, 1955 was harsh and predictable: Pavlenko was sentenced to capital punishment - execution, and his officers - to imprisonment for a period of 5 to 25 years.

4.

A characteristic detail - Pavlenko was tried for anti soviet, and not for illegal business and theft. And it is understandable why - for economic crimes, the organizer of a large, even by modern standards, private construction corporation, could receive only a long term in the camps. But not like a shooting. "Political" articles were applied in the Pavlenko case because this is really an out of the ordinary case. The vast majority of businessmen in the 40s and the first half of the 50s could exist in more or less conditions.

running mode.

Repressions began after Stalin's death. Oddly enough, under Khrushchev. The same Khrushchev who exposed the personality cult from the rostrum of the 20th Party Congress. The new general secretary promised to build communism by 1980. Private nicknames did not fit into this plan. What kind of communism really is, when at hand is a hotbed of private-property infection - artels and handicraftsmen? Khrushchev's stubbornness and idealism turned out to be more terrible for many than Stalin's iron hand.

"They already knew that they would be shot... They cried a lot. They ran and banged their heads against the wall. It was hard to watch," recalls Begdazhan Atakeev, a cellmate of two defendants in a sensational case of Kyrgyz knitters in the early 1960s. Siegfried Hasen Franz (assistant foreman of the local knitting factory) and Isaac Singer (foreman of one of the industrial artels) worked as "top managers" of this

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a corporation specializing in tailoring blouses, dresses, sweaters, etc.

Artels of Kyrgyz knitters were only above the water part of their business. Many transactions took place outside the official records. Purchased materials and equipment. Often the labor of workers from state factories was used in the artels. Some of the actual owners of artels worked at the same time at state enterprises. They bought decommissioned equipment, repaired it and put it into operation. Knitting machines were located on the territory of factories, in empty workshops and garages. For the release of unrecorded products, workers received salaries several times higher than the official ones and worked three times

shifts.

The core of the Kyrgyz knitwear was made up of Jews evacuated to Frunze during the war from the western regions of the USSR, including from the former territories of Poland and Romania. Many of them, in contrast to the Jews previously resettled in Kyrgyzstan, were not disposed to assimilate as soon as possible. The income from entrepreneurial activities allowed them to maintain at least some degree of their usual standard of living. The Hasenfranz family, for example, lived in a large house with servants. The head of the family had an office and a laboratory in a separate wing.

Stubbornness and idealism
Khrushchev for many
turned out to be worse
Stalin's railway
hands.

"Some of the knitters were from the West, [their] psychology was different from ours. They, for example, calmly spa whether, naively believing that if they gave a bribe to the top

ke, this guarantees safety, "recalls a relative of one of the executed. Illusions once fanned in January 1962, when about 150 people were arrested in Kyrgyzstan in connection with the "knitwear" case. An extremely unenviable fate awaited them.

5.

By the end of the Soviet era, the most severe measure - the death penalty - the Criminal Code punished twenty-two types of crimes. Among them are several economic ones. Execution was relied upon for the theft of state and public property on an especially large scale and for currency transactions (including transactions with gold).

It is indicative that at the end of the 1940s economic articles were removed from the execution list. Their return took place at the personal request of General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev. At the next plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, making a speech, Khrushchev, unexpectedly for everyone, started talking about the verdict in the case of currency speculators Jan Rokotov and Vladimir Faybishnikov. They were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. But Khrushchev didn't think that was enough.

"The judges themselves should be judged for such sentences," he angrily threw to the Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR. Criminal legislation was urgently revised. In the case of Rokotov, Faibishen, it was applied retroactively, both were shot. This case marked the beginning of a wave of real terror against Soviet entrepreneurs.

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The outburst of anger of the Secretary General was not at all accidental. Back in March 1959, during a meeting between Anastas Mikoyan and American economist Victor Perlo, an American

complained that his whole

du is pestered by some people

who offer him to sell the currency. Then, during a meeting between the publicist Albert Kahn and party ideologist Mikhail Suslov, the foreigner remarked that in a socialist country, currency speculators traded with impunity. Suslov was furious. He accused the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of not coping. And he demanded that the fight against smuggling and violation of foreign exchange transactions be transferred to the KGB. Chekists took up business and soon found out thoroughly what was going on in the illegal currency market of the USSR.

Its heart was the so-called "pleshka" - Gorky Street (now Tverskaya) from Pushkinskaya Square to the National and Moscow hotels. Right here

currency traders came to hunt in the hope of meeting with foreigners, potential currency sellers. The hunters were nicknamed "fartsovshchikov" (derived from "forcer", which in turn came from the question asked to a foreigner: "Have you anything for sale?").

However, the search for foreigners with currency on the "pleshka", in department stores, hotels and at exhibitions, was carried out by representatives of the lowest echelon. They were called "runners" or "trotters". They handed over the collected money above, to the "bosses". And those on

Execution relied
for embezzlement
state
and public
property in particular
large sizes
and foreign exchange transactions.

standing large currency speculators, "merchants". They were carefully hidden. They were known to a limited circle of verified persons. At the same time, some of them worked for the police and periodically handed over their "runners". The system functioned in this form for many years, if not all decades of Soviet power.

Under Khrushchev, the situation changed radically. According to one of the versions, not only Suslov, but also Nikita Sergeevich himself had to listen to unpleasant remarks about the currency traders. At the end of 1960 he was on a visit to West Berlin. During a meeting with local authorities, Khrushchev, in his usual manner, attacked the capitalist order. "The city has turned into a dirty swamp of speculation," Khrushchev thundered. However, in response, he received a cry from the audience: "There is no such black exchange as your Moscow one anywhere in the world!"

Upon returning home, Khrushchev demanded a certificate from the KGB on how the fight against currency traders and smugglers was being conducted. By that time, the committee members had already carried out a series of arrests of key market players. Although they were quick-witted and extremely cautious people, they, of course, could not compete with the Committee, with its unlimited resources and opportunities. Among those arrested were currency "kings" Vladislav Faibishenko, Yan Rokotov and Dmitry Yakov Lev, real whales among currency traders who held the largest transactions in their hands.

The bigwigs locked themselves up for a long time, but the investigators managed to split them by presenting numerous evidence and evidence detailed testimony of counterparties. The court sentenced

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all three to eight years in prison, the maximum possible punishment for currency crimes that existed at the time of their commission by Yakovlev, Faibishenko and Rokotov. Already in the course of the trial, by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the sentence for illegal currency transactions was increased to 15 years. But since the innovations were adopted after the arrest of the main defendants in the currency cases, this measure could not be applied to them retroactively.

They tried to explain all this to Khrushchev - that the law does not have retroactive effect, that punishment for a crime committed is possible only on the basis of the legislation in force at the time of the arrest of the criminals. However, he didn't want to listen. At the personal insistence of the Secretary General in the apparatus

The Central Committee of the CPSU hastily prepared a note to the Politburo, which justified the change in the articles of the Criminal Code relating to illegal foreign exchange transactions in the direction of already punishment up to death penalty.

Decree "On strengthening criminal responsibility for violation rules on currency transactions" introduced shooting article.

On July 1, 1961, the chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council, Leonid Brezhnev, signed the Decree "On Strengthening Criminal Responsibility for Violating the Rules on Foreign Exchange Transactions," which introduced a firing clause for foreign exchange transactions. And Prosecutor General Rudenko immediately filed a protest against the "softness" of the sentence. The case was accepted for consideration by the Supreme Court of the RSFSR, and following the results of a

trial sentenced three currency traders to death.

And although the stunning lawlessness of the Soviet authorities caused a wave of protests around the world - an open letter to Khrushchev on this subject was written, for example, by the French philosopher and public figure Bertrand Russell - the verdict was soon carried out.

knowledge.

6.

Almost simultaneously with the amendments introducing the death penalty for foreign exchange transactions, capital punishment was also introduced for embezzlement of socialist (read state) property on an especially large scale. Almost any illegal production in the then USSR could be summed up under this article. What happened to Kir

Giza jerseys.

Most of the episodes of the case of the guild workers from Frunze, as well as the arrests of most of them, also take place or before the adoption of amendments introducing the death penalty for economic crimes. However, as in the case of Rokotov and Faibishenko, the judge did not hesitate to apply them retroactively. "We have not harmed the state. How much the state had, so much remains. We got out on our own money, produced unrecorded products. We can't be tried for embezzlement," Siegfried Gasenfranz fought back in court from the shooting article. Unsuccessfully. Purchased and repaired machines, raw materials, labor time and other resources were all recognized

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stolen from the state. The result is 21 shot in the case.

A wave of similar processes swept throughout the USSR. And the matter was not limited to the outskirts - Ukraine, Transcaucasia, Central Asia or the Baltic states. A large workshop, by the way, also a knitwear workshop, was destroyed in Moscow. The business was organized by a certain Roifman. Born in 1925, with a secondary education, as the investigation later found out, since 1947 he had been organizing workshops at various state enterprises and organizations. In 1957, he launched the production of unrecorded products in the knitwear shop of the production plant of the society of the deaf and dumb in Kalinin. Then he bought for 2000 rubles a position for the leading workshops of the psycho-neurological dispensary of the Krasnopresnensky district health department of the city of Moscow and moved to the capital.

Having bribed whomever he needed, Roifman obtained permission to create a knitting shop at the mental dispensary. According to the legend, patients in it were supposed to be engaged in occupational therapy. Naturally, everyone who signed Roifman's documents was aware that the treatment had nothing to do with it. From the employees of the dispensary, the tenevik assembled a team of managers for his business. The head doctor of the dispensary also had a share - a special position of a medical employee of the workshop was created for him, with an official salary that was paid every month.

However, in addition to official production, Roifman also equipped a real workshop. It was located in the shafts of a residential building adjacent to the dispensary. There were several dozen knitting machines produced at the Leningrad plant "Stankoinstrument". Raw material

taken from the Zagorsk knitting factory. During the few years that Roifman's workshop was in operation, 460 tons of wool were processed there. The work went on in three shifts. The manufactured ladies' blouses, scarves, jumpers, etc., were then sent to the stalls located in the markets and railway stations. Sellers had share of sales.

It is interesting that, as in the case of the underground construction corporation Pavlenko, the workshop at the Moscow psychiatric dispensary was discovered by chance. One of Roifman's partners, a certain Shakerman, quarreled with his relatives, and they wrote a complaint to the prosecutor, in which they reported Shakerman's high unearned income. A check has been made. The police did not find any gold or valuables, but the house and its furnishings did not really correspond to the official income of the owner. A case was filed, searches began. Soon the activity of the workshop was revealed.

As a result, Roifman and Shakerman were found to have several tens of kilograms of gold. Embezzlement on an especially large scale and illegal gold and foreign exchange transactions - this was enough to sentence the owners of the Moscow workshop to the highest penalty. Roifman and Shakerman were shot.

The number of death sentences in 1961, when the death penalty for economic crimes was introduced, more than tripled in comparison with 1960 - until 1990. In 1962, capital punishment was applied 2159 times. Subsequently, the number of death sentences decreased. But the sword of Damocles of probable punishment hung over everyone who occupied in the USSR "commerce". For example, in 1973, in

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the height of the Brezhnev stagnation, when morals, especially in the Transcaucasian republics, softened significantly, Teymur Akhmedov, the father of businessman Farkhad Akh, was shot in Azerbaijan Medov, today - one of the richest people in Russia, number 103 in the Forbes magazine list.

Akhmedov Sr. was the director of one of the largest food enterprises in the republic and enjoyed the reputation of a large guild worker. With the coming to power of Yuri Andropov, the "merchants" were again taken seriously. Take, for example, the case of illegal tailoring in the village of Apsua, which was investigated by Anatoly Dorofeev - within its framework, three people were sentenced to death.

Number of mortals sentences in 1961 when was introduced the death penalty for economic crime increased by more than three times.

7.

But back to the 60s - under Khrushchev, artels and handicraftsmen were part of state enterprises. Private enterprise was finally ousted from the legal sphere. Repressions against the private trader have acquired a systemic and more brutal character. But, despite the criminal articles, private business activity in the USSR did not subside. How big was this phenomenon? In the USSR, if such statistics were kept, now they are "buried" in the still secret archives of the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. But the opportunity to give

quantitative assessment of the business "in the Soviet way" however eat less.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the American Duke University (California) conducted one of the largest sociological studies that shed light on real economic life in the Soviet Union. It was attended by about 3,000 former Soviet citizens who emigrated to the United States. The largest group - 85% - were emigrants who left the USSR in the period 1971–1982. These were former Soviet citizens of eleven republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan were not included in the field of view of scientists) who lived mainly in large industrial cities. What were the former owners of the hammer and sickle asked about? In short, it is about life in the "scoop".

Specially trained interviewers (one would like to add - in civilian clothes) asked emigrants dozens of questions: about family composition, education, occupation, welfare level, housing conditions, expenses and incomes, bank deposits, pensions, alcohol consumption, car ownership, etc. .P. However, the focus of attention of people with questionnaires, who "tormented" former Soviet citizens for hours, was what American sociologists a little later called the "second economy" (second economy) of the Soviet Union.

yuza, that is, illegal, not subordinating to the almighty Gosplan, which steered the "first", the official economy of the Union.

Yes, a lot of claims could be made to the study. Take, for example, the ethnic composition of the group that took part in the survey: Jews - 53%, Armenians -

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23%, 18% - Russians,
Ukrainians and Belarusians,
7% - all the rest. But what to do -

I had to interrogate the one who
left. And this was the so-called

Jewish wave of emigration. Another
big minus is that the sample was
not formed randomly, as required
by the canons of sociology, and the
organizers themselves selected the

respondents. But we can say again - they interviewed those who
could be asked. And yet, it was the first truly fundamental
scientific study that shed light on how the real, and not the
"gosplan" Soviet economy actually functions.

For private

entrepreneurship
severe

punishment, but

greasy "grease" of

corruption allows

millions of people

solve problems with

Criminal Code.

What was clear from the polls? For example, the fact
that few people in the USSR lived on only one salary
(you remember those that echoed in the hearts of the
Soviet people Papanov's catchphrase in "The Diamond
Arm"). That people dodge a thousand and one ways, but
manage to receive income that does not depend on the
state. That a significant part of the trade turnover does
not pass through official trading networks, but through
illegal channels. That, despite official prohibitions, Soviet
citizens are engaged in private business. And what, yes
- severe punishment is due for this, but the fat "grease"
of corruption allows millions of people to solve problems
from Ugolov
code.

Of course, fragmentary information that the
functioning of the Soviet economy is not so perfect,

as it is clear from official data, the United States has acted before. However, analysis of the data obtained in the course of the study, called the Berkerly-Duke survey, made it possible for the first time to systematize previously disparate information about the realities of the Soviet economy.

Here are some touches to the picture. Agriculture remains outside the economy clearly regulated by the State Planning Commission. According to the estimates of American researchers, the volume of products grown on subsidiary plots and sold on collective farm markets or by hand, amounted to 25% of all food consumed in the USSR. The activity itself was not illegal. However, the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, animal feed and poultry was already illegal in most cases. As a direct participant in this kind of activity, I confirm that it was so!

A powerful private business was formed in the construction sector of the Soviet economy. In some regions, private coven contractors accounted for up to half of all construction workers. What else? Illegal sale of goods "from the back door" by employees of state stores. Tutors who recruit schoolchildren to enter universities. Renting apartments and cottages. Moonshine. Prostitution. So

Further.

As assessed in the 70s - early 80s, American Kansk researchers following the results of the sociological survey of emigrants, "private" incomes, that is, those received not from the state, amounted to 28 to 33% of all incomes of Soviet households. The private sector employed up to 10–12% of the entire workforce.

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It is worth thinking about these numbers. Every tenth worked for himself, well, or for his "uncle", but not for the state. Every third ruble earned in the USSR came from the private sector. And if we exclude the privileged strata of society - highly skilled workers at defense factories, the top of the technical and humanitarian intelligentsia, the party nomenklatura, etc.? It turns out that the "left" incomes of citizens accounted for half or more of the family budget.

...Well, is this country reasonable? "Everything around is folk and everything around is mine!" And in fact - a draw! The property of no one can be in the essence of its definition. And if the people do not use property, if in their own country they are only hired and exploited workers, then it means that property has been alienated from the people by the ruling elites, just as defined by Marx. When the bureaucracy turns the state into its private property, depriving people of material and moral incentives, accustoming them to irresponsibility and indifference. And everyone who showed independence, activity, whether a scientist or a production worker, was subject to isolation and destruction ... Everyone remembers the fate of Ivan Khudenko, Johannes Khint, the Vorkuta builders, the Pechora gold diggers ... Yes, and my fate is indicative

no less...

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

8.

Let's return to the beginning of the story about our "cargo" motorcycle. There is no particular exclusivity in my personal history. Private economic initiative in the Soviet society

From point of view
state private
entrepreneurship
considered evil.

And with him it is necessary
had to fight

in the 1970s and 1980s, and more early period is quite common. The reason is simple - people tend to strive for the best, for this they are ready to work and earn. So there was business in the USSR. He fed tens of millions of people.

Another thing is that from the point of view of the state, private enterprise was considered evil. And he had to fight.

In the case of small and very small "own business", it was by default recognized that this evil was inevitable. Indeed, the Soviet government was never able to feed the population at the expense of collective farms and state farms. What now, to die of hunger? No, it's better to let the engineers dig in their gardens. But as soon as the private trader got up a little, completely different rules of the game came into force.

Result? How can I put it... To call the forms into which the entrepreneurial activity of Soviet citizens poured out perverted and contrary to common sense is almost nothing to say.

At the top of the pyramid of business in the USSR were real underground factories operating under the guise of state-owned enterprises, using their raw materials and labor. Despite the huge, literally deadly risk for the leaders of such workshops, the enterprises prospered for years before being crushed. Let's consider a specific example.

CHAPTER II

Baku shop worker

... A very valuable pine grows in the Angara region - thin-layered, resinous, moisture resistant. Construction lumber from this pine is exported. They paid 120 rubles per cubic meter in 1980. Today they pay twice as much. Each board is strictly maintained in size - calibrated for thickness, width, length, number of knots and their diameter. And everything that is not calibrated goes into a reduced grade, or into substandard condition and ... is burned at the famous landfill in Lesosibirsk. But this is a wonderful timber, so necessary in the national economy. At least as a rough household billet for 19 rubles per cubic meter.

Having achieved the decision of the Krasnoyarsk Territory Executive Committee with permission to sell this substandard to the side, the management of the Novo-Yeniseisky LDK and LDK-2 Lesosibirsk entered into a contractual deal with me, which they were prompted to a large extent by a natural disaster at the Novo-Yeniseisky LDK.

There, a warehouse for export products was completely burned down. In order to have an idea of the damage caused, I will only say that a large hoisting and transport facility, power substations, and fire services burned down. A huge profitable economy perished. Deliveries of lumber from the plant, and hence, mutual settlements with consumers, have ceased. Receipts of money into the account - too.

The first question arose during the liquidation of the accident: MTS (material and technical supply. - *M.K.*) Where to get supply engineers who would know and be able to supply not only the necessary materials, say, for a group of metals, but also cable products, cable , accessories

products, electric motors, internal combustion engines, vehicles and much, much more?

Suppliers were invited from outside: from Taldy-Kurgan, No Vosibirsk, Omsk. I was invited from Kurgan. My 'by

The usefulness was that I immediately found "customers" - buyers who could pay in advance. These were solvent collective farms, state farms, able to immediately pay wages to workers at the LDK for the liquidation of the accident and the release of products for them. According to my orders. And things went.

About all this there are references in the lawyer's dossier. They also indicate the economic effect of my activities. But when the investigation began in May 1981, people were led not by intelligence, but by fear. After all, they did not demand the truth from them, the investigation did not need it. Whoever began to insist on the truth, he was immediately "broken" ... And he said what the investigators needed. People were afraid of prison more than death!

"Mark Mikhailovich, you are doomed!" - the closest people told me ...

Notes of a Soviet Broker, Mark Sherman

Production waste is burned in a landfill. Meanwhile, these wastes have a well-known commercial value. And it's not waste at all - it's a board, a bar, well, maybe a slab (boards with bark). All this is a material in demand in construction. There is a person who organizes its delivery to consumers. Helps the company to earn money for the recovery

Chapter II. **Baku shop worker**

after a fire. From today's point of view, and indeed from the point of view of common sense, it is rational and efficient economic activity. Not so in the Soviet economy,

where the movement of commodity flows was possible only by the decisions of the State Planning Commission and all kinds of central administrations. Private initiative?

What is a broker? He is fifteen years old!

Although, of course, in his notes Sherman avoids some points. How did he agree with the leadership of the LDK that

he was allowed to go to these very waste products?

That's how he came, and they let him in right away? Of course not. Each of the participants in economic schemes that go beyond the official ones was forced to break the law. And his partners, contractors, in general - the other side, also had to do this. And there were still inspection and control bodies.

They all had to pay for the risk. To pay with money, services - everything that can be appreciated. It was an activity that continually produced corruption. By distributing bribes, the figures of the Soviet informal economy created a "cocoon" around themselves and their business, which seemed to ensure its safe functioning. The key words here are "seemingly". The distribution of bribes did not give any guarantees. But in case of failure, it added to the severity of the accusation. I have a separate example for you that illustrates the problem well.

Distributing bribes, figures of the Soviet informal economies created around your business "cocoon", like providing its safe functioning.

1.

Meet Ramiz Shabanov. 1949 year of birth. Azerbaijani. He lived all his life in Baku. Graduated from technical school. Member of the CPSU. He worked as an engineer-technologist of section No. 3 of the haberdashery factory of the Ministry of Local Industry of the Azerbaijan SSR. Today, this is all that can be said about this man. How did he live, what did he dream about? Who was his wife, and what plans do they have or for the future of their children? There are no answers to these questions in the criminal case and the verdict of the Baku City

There is another. In 1987, Ramiz Shabanov received fifteen years in prison. For what? On his site, Shabanov organized a workshop, a private enterprise. During the three years that came to the attention of the investigators, Shabanov's enterprise produced goods worth approximately 1 million rubles. By today's standards - a medium-sized

business. Like a small sawmill with a carpentry shop. Or a more or less decent car service.

haberdashery factory - these are several dirty buildings where curtains, curtains, pillows were cut, all kinds of jewelry, rugs and the like were made from plastic. Several hundred employees. Beggarly official salaries. What did Shabanov come up with? He, as

it is called in modern economics textbooks, optimized business processes and launched the production of a new product.

All commodity

supplies

carried out

according

with directives

Gosplan. And any

removal of part

was considered theft

state

property.

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At the Shabanov site, among other things, the so-called "skins" were made - rugs made of polyurethane foam, which in the 70s and 80s were fashionable to lay on the floor in the bathroom or toilet. The parameters of these products, like everything in the USSR, were set by the corresponding GOSTs. Shabanov figured that the thickness of the rugs could be reduced - buyers, most likely, will not notice this. But they will notice the improvement in design and will definitely appreciate it. There were to be two improvements: a fringe of rum along the edges and a lining of terry cloth. To understand how much the new product was superior to the prototype in the eyes of the consumer, one must fast forward thirty years ago, to the early 80s. When in stores and the usual rug was not to be found.

If this happened today, it would be enough for Shabanov to surf the Internet, type in "supplies of polyurethane foam" in Yandex and call the offices whose websites inspire confidence. In the days of developed socialism, things were quite different. And it was, of course, not in the absence of the Internet.

To begin with, in the conditions of the state centralized economy, all commodity deliveries were carried out in accordance with the directives of the State Planning Commission. And any seizure of their part was considered theft of state property. In other words, there was no legal possibility to purchase raw materials. Shabanov, of course, knew this. So it was necessary to "pin off" from official supplies. The question is how?

Having figured out what was happening, the enterprising technologist sketched out a sketch of a device that made it possible to dissolve standard foam sheets in two in thickness. liuretán. Through the technology department of the factory, he

put the device into production. And acquaintances in the tool shop, where failed equipment was repaired, did the rest for fifty dollars.

The "mining" of the second important ingredient - terry cloth for lining, Shabanov also arranged at his side, in the workshop. He reconfigured the knitting machines that worked under his supervision so that they produced terry knitted fabric that was lighter than the standards. The resulting surplus became the raw material for "leftist" production.

Finally, Shabanov managed to produce fringe and braid, which was planned to be used to sheathe rugs of an improved design, on decommissioned fanging machines that once worked in the workshop, and then, after changing the range of products, gathered dust without things in the warehouse.

2.

That's all. Literally from nothing, a technological chain was assembled, allowing to release merchandise purchased by buyers. And he really was such - otherwise it would not have been possible to sell about 120,000 products over the next three years. Investments are minimal. And what is characteristic - there were no consumer complaints that the terry cloth became thinner and the rugs not so thick in the criminal case of Shabanov, which was initiated in 1985. That is, people, in principle, were satisfied with everything. And if we describe the activities of the Baku guild worker from the point of view of entrepreneurial logic, then everything looks without reproachfully.

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After all, what did Shabanov do? He analyzed the demand that existed at that time, formulated his unique offer for the market. Optimized the technological processes available at that time. Redistributed in favor of the new project the supply of part of the raw materials, without significantly worsening the characteristics of the manufactured products. Finally, he activated idle equipment. This is exactly what an effective entrepreneur should do. But that's from today's point of view. Well, in the 80s, everything that Shabanov did, in a classical way, fit into article 88-1 of the Criminal Code of the Azerbaijan SSR - embezzlement on an especially large scale.

You ask, how did all this manage to be organized under the noses of the factory authorities? Yes, very simple. It, of course, was in share. The head of the technical control department of the factory received 60 rubles a month at first, then, in the last year of the shop's existence, 100 rubles each.

Shabanov paid the senior merchandiser and chief mechanic of the factory 50 rubles a month. The head of the personnel department and the chief economist of the factory - 30 rubles each. The list of people to whom Shabanov paid a fixed "royalty" monthly for the comfortable functioning of his business takes up almost a page in the verdict. The scrupulousness of the count cannot but surprise - among other things, two rugs are mentioned that Shabanov gave to some minor police rank.

Shabanov shared his income with the head of the non-departmental security - he was supposed to issue

var outside the enterprise. He gave money to employees of the local printing house - and they printed forms of strict accountability documents (receipts, waybills, rows, etc.), which made it possible to turn left-handed products into official ones.

Shabanov paid a total of about 500 rubles to the head of the supply service of one of the large Tyumen oil-producing enterprises, and he organized the supply of Shabanov's products to the north. Calculations were made based on the norm of 0.5% of the cost of shipped products. Today, such payments would be it would be more correct to call it not bribes, but investments in the promotion of goods. Well, or a rollback, although today's Gazprom suppliers have its norm, most likely you invites a smile.

Basically, the goods were sold through Baku stores. The directors, Shabanov's acquaintances, ordered from the factory the volumes they needed, which included "left" products. Stores received goods. And then the waybills were replaced with new ones, with the same date and addressee of delivery, but with the volume of delivery reduced by the amount of "Shabanov" products. In this way, "leftist" rugs were withdrawn from legal circulation, and the money for them did not go to the factory's account, but to Shabanov personally. Store directors for sales and risk were left with 20% of the value of the goods sold.

3.

What was the scale of the business? If measured by the profit that could be extracted from it, then 8,000-10,000 rubles a month. By the standards of the late Soviet

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rhoda is not enough. But, an interesting detail, this money was received by no means only by the creator of the scheme, Ramiz Shabanov.

... The basis for the distribution of "income" from the sale of stolen products between members of the group ("companions") was distribution, taking into account the monetary "share" participation, expressed which is expressed as a percentage of the amount contributed by the "companion" share. The cost of one percent of the share participation was determined by the possibility of making a profit from stolen products: the quality of equipment, market conditions, the possibility of providing raw materials, the "safety" of the crime being carried out, the possibility of marketing products, the terms of the contract with trading organizations, etc. All these factors were determined by decision of the members groups of robbers... the cost of 1% is 1,000 rubles. Under such conditions and on the basis of the specified amount, the group of plunderers and

new members entered.

From the verdict of the Baku City Court in the case of Ramiz Shabanov

What does this mean in simple Russian translation? Even at the start of the project, in early 1982, Shabanov attracted two co-investors - some Kamal Sadykhov and Albert Dzhagraev. After all, money was needed to distribute bribes to those who needed it and set up the necessary equipment. Starting investments were estimated at 100,000 rubles. Shabanov contributed 30,000 rubles, borrowing most of it from relatives. Sadi Khov and Dzhagraev contributed 35,000 each.

The partners agreed that the company's capital would be divided into shares - 1% each. The share will cost 1000 rubles, it will be possible to sell your shares and

to the side. That is, in today's terms, in the secondary market. Shabanov's first partners took advantage of this right about a year after the launch of the business, selling their shares at par. Taking into account the money received during this period from the current activities of the enterprise, the investments brought a return of 90% per annum. This, of course, was incomparable with the interest of Sberbank. Kidding. Naturally, none of these people seriously thought about making money by placing deposits there.

Having doubled their capital, they invested it in another similar business. And maybe they got burned. And perhaps not. It is likely that some of these funds still played in the large-scale privatization that began some eight to ten years later in the space that was already the former USSR by that time.

But as for Shabanov, the result of his story is sad - in 1984, large-scale inspections began at the haberdashery factory. A double-entry bookkeeping system and dozens of workshops similar to Shabanov's were opened at the enterprise. The investigative team, staffed by specialists from Moscow, set to work. The case of our hero and his business was separated into a separate proceeding.

The investigators worked at an accelerated pace, and already three years later, in July 1987, the judge of the Baku City Court, Adinbekov, read out quickly: "In collusion with accomplices, Shabanov R. under the sign of a functioning haberdashery factory - a socialist enterprise with a state form of economic activity - using its equipment , energy resources and paid in cash

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the labor of employees, was engaged in the manufacture of unrecorded products for the purpose of extracting profits, i.e. private entrepreneurial activity, committed in this way a crime under article 152 of the Criminal Code of the Azerbaijan SSR," it seemed, was still heard in the hall. Here's how - for the purpose of making a profit! Shabanov, while the judge read out the verdict, still hoping in vain for something, wearily closed his eyes.

"In the name of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic... Shabanov Ramiz Safar-ogly... to sentence..."
Fifteen years in prison with confiscation of property.

Shabanov was 38 years old. He was supposed to be released in 2002, at the age of 53. Consider a pensioner. Life passed.

4.

Naturally, the workshop owner was not an angel. To begin with, he periodically told his companions that it would be necessary to give additional money to this or that official. Partners chipped in, but Shabanov did not transfer money to anyone, leaving them to himself. In total, he thus heated the partners of thousands of thirty rubles.

On the other hand, he really gave bribes to his leadership, officials, policemen. Moreover, he gave them to dozens of people. In order to easily find a common language with greedy and unprincipled people, you probably need to be at least partly like that yourself. In any case, do not be tormented by conscience after each transfer of the offering. I mean that

Shabanov, probably, was not only a clever technologist, but also a cunning swindler, a rather thick-skinned and cynical person. In other words, not the person you would gladly let go of your daughter to marry.

But such were the rules of business, which Shabanov did not invent and make obligatory for everyone. As stated above, in order to get raw materials, they had to be stolen. In order to not pay attention to this, it was necessary to give a bribe. Those were the rules of the game. Shabanov played it. Had he been in other circumstances, he would have acted differently. Maybe it would be a different man.

Well, if you talk abstractly, then of course it's good to be honest. Don't give bribes. Run a transparent business. But... How to put it more precisely... I'd better give a suitable example, from my point of view. In the Middle Ages in Europe, gangs of rogues hunted by kidnapping babies. Stolen children

were placed in barrels, and specially designed boats were put on their arms and legs. The children grew up to be freaks. And they were sold for good money to circuses or wealthy

To obtain

raw materials, it is necessary

was to steal. To
didn't pay attention to it
attention - need
was to bribe. These
were
rules of the game.

ny clients who wished to

have fun. What happened to Soviet entrepreneurs is from the same series. For a person who had worked in the underground business for a long time, there were too few chances not to turn into one or another

degree in "moral ugliness".

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The circumstances of the environment, given by the essence of a planned economy and the ideology prevailing in the USSR, were such that actions that grow out of a desire for success that is quite natural for a person and achieve statistic, took on the character of clearly asocial and criminal. What is the share of the fault of the guild workers in this, and what is the fault of the systems? Hard to tell. In any case, I would not undertake to judge how much it was beyond the scope of general human morality. And even more so to accuse or give these people indulgence.

5.

As for Ramiz Shabanov, the fate of the Baku guild worker was not so tragic. Shabanov spent about a year in a pre-trial detention center by the time the verdict was announced. By that time, perestroika had begun in Moscow. In less than a year, the law "On Cooperation in the USSR" will be adopted. Most of the charges under which Shabanov received his 15 years will no longer contain corpus delicti. And in 1991 Azerbaijan will become an independent state. Shabanov was released from prison in 1992. He spent only a third of his term in the colony.

But it will be later. In the meantime, let's rewind the tape back to February 1984, during the heyday of the workshop created by Shabanov. A characteristic detail - the biggest bribe, of those, of course, that came to the attention of the investigators, Shabanov, through an intermediary, transferred to a certain Aziz Manafov, a big shot in the control and audit department of the Ministry of Local Industry of the Azerbaijan SSR.

In total, the inspector received 15,000 rubles, a colossal sum for those times. Of course, Manafov left something for himself. But most of that money has certainly been handed over to the top. Although this is just a guess. There is not a word in the materials of Shabanov's case about what happened to the "rent" that he regularly paid to his superiors, officials, policemen and other inspectors. Where did that money go next?

Meanwhile, an analysis of this part of Shabanov's story would shed light on how the Soviet system of "educating" business functioned. Naturally, the owner of a private enterprise at the Baku haberdashery factory could not implement such a complex project (with the modernization of the technological cycle at the enterprise, a well-functioning sales system and the redistribution of capital among investors) if it were not part of a properly functioning mechanism where such enterprises are in the order of things. And where do they operate?

great multitude.

However, if the "Shabanov case" is silent about this, then other sources provide an opportunity to understand the situation ...

CHAPTER III

plundered republic

... Summer 1973. Heat in Baku. The city is white, like the gray Caspian frozen in a storm. The same white sun hanging over the embankment.

In the building of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, a construction of the 40s in the style of Stalinist classicism, a difficult conversation took place in the office of the first secretary.

- You're leaving, are you? - Heydar Aliyev asked, for four years by that time he had been the head of the republic. In this capacity, he will remain until 1991. And then, after the break - from 1995 to 2009, until the very of death.

- Yes/

"Didn't achieve anything by flying, did you decide to at least achieve something, limping? .. Crazy.

- Who?

Aliyev looked, frowned, knitted his eyebrows, turned away. The conversation was over.

This is how Ilya Zemtsov, former head of the Information Sector of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, describes his last meeting with Aliyev. Until a certain moment, Zemtsov was one of Aliyev's confidants, helping Aliyev come to power. He, in gratitude, sent him to Moscow, to the secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

But in the capital, the career of a sociologist did not work out, Zemtsov quarreled with his curators from the Academy of Sciences. The difficult atmosphere in the upper strata of the Soviet party nomenklatura, the squabbling for positions, the undercover struggle of Zemtsov weighed heavily. He seriously thought about emigrating. However, in order to leave, it was necessary to obtain permission. Zemtsov flew to Aliyev, hoping that he would help. In the course of the conversation that took place, the sociologist unobtrusively hinted to the first secretary of the Azerbaijan SSR about the services he had previously rendered, which helped Aliyev to take his post. Aliyev, grimacing, promised to help with permission to leave.

In 1973 Zintsov left for Israel. In 1976 he published in Paris the book "The Party and the Mafia. Developed Republic. In it, on the basis of classified materials, access to which Zemtsov received while working in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the AzSSR, it describes in detail how the shadow sector of the Soviet economy worked in the 60–70s. Here is one of the highlight episodes.

1.

Time of action - 1970. The scene of action is Baku, a plant of paint and varnish coatings. The scheme is simple: the components of the manufactured paint are white and vegetable oil - were replaced by surrogates - chalk and asidol, the cost of which is ten times lower. The characters are the head of the shop, Dazhdamirov, and the head of the warehouse, Osipov. As Zemtsov writes, one of them periodically went to enterprises producing semi-finished products, in particular, to the Yaroslavl chemical plant. A bribe of 2-3 thousand rubles - and instead of

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200 tons of white laid according to the supply standards, 100 tons of white and 400 tons of chalk were sent to Baku.

Further, it was easier: instead of the 300 tons of paint required according to the plan, the workshop produced 600 tons. Let's take into account at the same time that the cost of paint is noticeably lower than the officially approved one - after all, not high-quality, but cheaper substitutes were used as raw materials. The production counter and the laboratory are in the share. They register the production of only 300 tons, and, as a rule, another 20-30 tons in addition - to exceed the plan. Why, you ask, do the plunderers of socialist property need extra supplies? Everything is very simple: the head of the shop is a member of the district committee of the party, and the storekeeper is a people's deputy, a member of the local district council. To advance their party career, they need to be at the forefront of production.

300 tons of paint produced outside the plan are sold through a network of trade cooperation stores. Directors of stores, of course, proven people and they are in the share. They have a portion of the proceeds. Something goes to the sellers. Well, most of the income, about 70%, - writes Ilya Zemtsov, - the manufacturer returns to the shop.

Business turnover? You can guess. One kilogram of paint was sold for 2 rubles. We multiply by 300 tons - we get an annual sales volume of 600,000 rubles. The income of the creators of the scheme is about 420,000 rubles. Enormous money, considering that an engineer receives a maximum of 1,500 rubles a year.

A characteristic detail is the scale of the workshop's business, the schemes involved, the income of the participants in the scheme is approximately the same in the production described by Zemtsov

"left" paint, and in the "Shabanovsky" shop. Let me remind you that these two episodes are separated by more than 10 years.

What does it mean? Only one thing - the schemes for conducting underground private business within the Soviet economy were, if I may say so, quite standard. And at least from the end of the 60s until the very death of the USSR, they did not fundamentally change. "Everything that I have described on the model of one workshop, translate into the scale of the country — thousands and thousands of workshops, factories, factories — and you will get a close-to-reality picture of a gigantic

Management schemes
underground private
business inside
Soviet economy
from the late 60s to
the end of the USSR
fundamentally not
changed.

organized underground business," writes Zemtsov.

The nomenclature of goods, geography, production technology is changing, but the structure of the crime is unchanged - replacement of expensive components with cheap ones, secret purchase of non-stock raw materials, introduction of changes in technological processes. And often both, and another, and the third together. The same, in general terms, and implementation scheme - through familiar store directors, falsifying reporting.

Here are more examples.

2.

Kharkiv. In the fur shop of the local regional consumer society, in the mid-80s, a scheme was opened - when cutting fur, insulation for linings and fabrics, the rate of write-off of materials was artificially inflated. Where by

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technology required to use the material in one layer, the fabric was supposedly cut at the rate of two layers. By were new decorations and fur details that were not provided for in the technical descriptions of the products. Appeared, of course, only in the reporting to justify the increased consumption of fur. In fact, there were no decorations. Just from the raw materials saved in this way, extra-planned hats, coats, and fur coats were sewn.

In order to hide these operations, the participants developed a sophisticated scheme for the preparation of internal documents and the movement of invoices. Sales of goods took place through the largest department stores in Kharkov. The directors involved in the scheme, merchandisers and heads of departments of stores, accepting unaccounted for goods, produced false documents, where the number of goods accepted for sale was underestimated. Coats, short fur coats and other illegal products were put into trade. And then that part of the proceeds that fell on its sale was withdrawn from the cash desks and divided among the participants in the enterprises. The turnover of the illegal enterprise was about 300,000 rubles a year.

The investigation was able to trace the operation of the scheme described above at least during the entire first half of the 1980s. Most likely, illegal tailoring in the Kharkiv Regional Consumer Union flourished even before that. Except with other members. They left the punishment. But those who fell under the distribution in 1984 got to the fullest - dozens of people, including five
ry directors of stores and three organizers of

The process directly at the garment factory received terms of five to ten years.

Ivanovo textile mill, weaving shop for the production of women's scarves. In 1971, it was revealed that the scarves did not meet the standards. 18 square centimeters less, 31 grams lighter. That is, a channel was created at the enterprise for the extraction of raw materials for illegal production. Scale: Annual output is 800,000 pieces. At the manufacture of each scarf, 31 grams were confiscated in favor of the shadow sector of the economy. In total, about 25 tons per year in the entire production.

Popov's largest radio plant in the USSR. In 1970, it was discovered that in VEF transistors (perhaps, you still remember, there were such radios the size of a schoolbag), the circuit did not correspond to the actual number of diodes - there were one less. The cost of one diode is 82 kopecks. The plant produced 182,000 receivers per year. The result was a thin stream of illegal unscheduled deliveries to hundreds if not thousands of electrical and appliance repair shops. And after all, someone built and controlled this scheme ...

Moscow First Watch Factory. It is still working, and watches are still being assembled in a gray panel building on Marksistskaya Street, a couple of minutes walk from the Krestyanskaya Zastava metro station. True, in an order of magnitude smaller volumes than under Soviet rule. They make all the same men's watches "Poljot". In the late 1960s, they were making 750,000 pairs a year. And in 1970, a scandal erupted. No single stone was placed into the clock mechanism during assembly. A pebble costs 42 kopecks

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The scale of theft is about 300,000 rubles a year. Another raw material channel that fed the second economy of the USSR.

In another Moscow case, on September 12, 1986, the Moscow Regional Court sentenced several people to lengthy prison terms for the illegal production of one of the iconic consumer products.

of the late Soviet period - the so-called transfer pictures. Well, you remember - you stick them on a school bag, peel off the top layer of the film, and the image remains on the briefcase.

One of the group members shipped the raw material, the so-called gummed paper, using fake invoices. Another during the existence of the scheme changed four jobs, and at each of them - these were printing enterprises, he managed to establish shadow production. The third, working in the system of book trade, organized the sale of products. In just three years, about 3.5 million decals were sold at a price of 18 kopecks apiece. Payback - six years with confiscation of property.

3.

Of course, one might think that all these are just individual shortcomings of the planned system of the Soviet economy. That indeed some people "sometimes here and there ..." But imagine: hundreds and thousands of tons of raw materials withdrawn from circulation are stored somewhere. From somewhere comes the equipment necessary for leftist production. And what to do if the worker fulfilling the left order suddenly begins to see clearly and realizes that he an

do the shift mates actually produce two, or even three times more products than they should according to the plan?

Of course, you can appease them with bonuses and other surcharges. Take, in fact, a share. But the problem remains - he will blabber or, even worse, begin to blackmail. The problem is to make exposure impossible. Or at least unlikely. This means that a "benevolence" perimeter should be formed from inspectors, employees of supervisory authorities, and local officials on whose territory business is conducted. They are, if not active participants in the business, then you are certainly its beneficiaries.

... You see, economically the "tops" have settled down well, they are satisfied with the monopoly of power. "Economic independence" was acquired, "dignity", so to speak. ... And frankly, you will understand me, it is not socialism that worries them. And they don't care about him. And about how not to lose a convenient form of exploitation - disguised from the people. This form suits them: there is both money and irresponsibility. But this, you understand, is a separate topic and a special conversation. And the purpose of this pisanina is not that. But already painfully socio-politically everything is intertwined, you can't get around, you can't go around. But the fact that in this country there was and is state capitalism - the exploitation of the people by the state - is a fact. Otherwise, why am I sitting here?

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

And indeed, if Zemtsov is to be believed (and there is no reason not to believe — he used classified documents that came through the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs), all

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underground business in Azerbaijan was closely integrated into the system of party-state administration. Starting from the lowest levels of administrative management and almost to the very top, writes Zemtsov. Officials do not live on one salary. They feed from the jurisdictional territory, industry. They feed themselves, and pass part of the money upstairs. Let's see how it happens.

All underground business in Azerbaijan was closely embedded into the system of party state management. Beginning from the lowest steps and practically to the very top.

Stop one: militia-prosecutor's office. The salary of the head of the district police department in the early 70s was 200-250 rubles. The district prosecutor - a little less, 150-180 rubles. How much should each of them be paid so that the payment looks solid and the petitioner is not shown the door along with his offering? Zemtsov writes that the head of the regional department should be offered 2,000 rubles, and half of this amount will be enough for the prosecutor.

To them, in turn, part of these funds must be transferred upwards. These are direct costs. They are included in the price of the position. For each of them, says Zemtsov, there was a "quotation". In 1969, the chair of the head of the regional police department in Azerbaijan was estimated at 50,000 rubles. The position of the district prosecutor - 30,000 rubles.

Money given and taken. Now you have to pay monthly. The set of paid services includes a warning about upcoming inspections, blocking anonymous messages and other denunciations. At the same time, one should not forget that

The police and the prosecutor's office also have their own plan - to solve crimes. And if there is a guild worker who will pay more or offer other, better conditions, then the old client can be sacrificed. Although, of course, the matter can be improved by adding one-time payments to the regular ones.

We move on - the district committee of the party. This is an important element in the design. Signals from above come here and complaints from below "ground" here. Who can correctly translate the first and shelve the second is understandable. This is the first secretary of the district committee. He has a specialized deputy secretary for industry. These two people need to be paid. How many? Zemtsov says that here, too, the tax is formed on the basis of a coefficient of 10 to the salary. The first secretary can officially receive up to 3,000 rubles a month, the secretary for industry - about 2,000 rubles. Unofficial payments that they should offer are 30,000 and 20,000 rubles, respectively.

4.

Of course, the ratio of 1 to 10 is not a dogma. Those who decide little can be paid less. The rate fluctuates between a coefficient of 3-4 to the official salary, if we are talking, for example, about a city court judge, and 2-3 - if you need to pay the people's comptroller. Who else? To the city committee of the party - there is the head of the department of industry, in the corresponding ministry or the head office. OBKhSS, city, regional, republican prosecutors. One way or another, getting involved in

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30-50 people are attending. And the creator of the scheme is hardly 15-20%. Yes, and those must be shared with companions.

It turns out that the creator of the scheme, receiving, of course, an order of magnitude more money than ordinary Soviet citizens, nonetheless sends a share comparable to his personal income to all kinds of inspectors and officials. It feeds the layer parasitizing on it.

But wait, can you tell. If this is the case, then why be afraid? If it's possible to reach an agreement with everyone so easily, then where did those imprisoned and shot come from?

The thing is, a bribe is not an insurance policy with a guaranteed payout. This is just a way to solve the problem today and with one person. The Soviet state machine as a whole rejected the private trader. Its repressive organs worked. And often they worked effectively. Who exactly will get caught this time? It was more of a matter of statistics. Or fate. The chance that the entire punitive power of the state would fall upon you today was even for the most, it seemed, resourceful and successful.

CHAPTER IV

special service

In the Soviet system of combating the entrepreneur The key role was occupied by a body called "OBKhSS". Although, strictly speaking, this organization was called differently since 1947.

Fight crime in the economic sphere

The Soviet punitive machine began almost from the moment of its creation. After all, the redistribution of

economic benefits was the

main thing that the

Bolsheviks promised the masses of the people.

Already in the VChK, established in 1918, there were numerous divisions to combat speculation and

In the Soviet

wrestling system

with entrepreneurship

played a key role

body called
"OBHSS".

abuses in the system of state administration and distribution. However, the effect of their activities, despite the harsh sentences, tended to zero. And four years after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks faced the same problems. Here is an eloquent "document of the era."

Citizens! Railroad workers!

The eternal disgrace of tsarist Russia - the system of ransoming, extortion and bribery, has made a strong nest for itself in the most

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more sensitive area of our economic organism - in the railway economy. Bribe on iron

roads has become so "normal" that many
railroad comrades dulled sensitive
ness.

On the railroads, everything can be bought and sold for money.

a shared reward, which with skillful vile hands corrupt
the body is proportionally distributed between the switchman and the highest ranks.
Masses of speculators for a bribe fill protection cars, cut through Russia lengthwise
and across them, and envelop the young Soviet Republic with their spider web. Any
attachment, uncoupling, further promotion, be it a separate protection car, an echelon
of refugees, food cargo of a separate organization - everything is directly dependent
on a bribe.

The disasters caused by this evil to the state are innumerable.
and nightmarish in their consequences.

Refugees from the hungry Volga region, moving along the outfits of Glavevak, get
stuck at the junction stations and are doomed to inhuman torments; workers'
organizations that have set out to buy bread for hungry families are wandering

months "due to lack of rolling stock"; food, going to save the children and women of
the Volga region, wanders somewhere or gloomily stands on the tracks in anticipation
of "something
missing."

And behind this gloomy veil, scenes are played out of shameless, vile bribery and
reckless revelry of a bunch selling labor Russia, exhausted in the grip of an enemy
encirclement, economic ruin and covering

an unheard-of shame the glorious name of the railway pro
letariat.

State bodies - the tribunals and the Cheka, called to combat bribery, will no longer allow such a shame.

Bribery on railways must and will be used rooted.

Be vigilant and vigilant! Proletarian hands must not and cannot be soiled with bribes!

"Beep" No. 47 of December 6, 1921

During the period of the New Economic Policy, the instruments of struggle against private property instincts and entrepreneurship were temporarily sheathed, repressions against speculators subsided. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, in February 1924, numerous departmental police units were created (commercial and industrial police, credit and financial, mining, factory, market, resort, etc.). They were maintained at the expense of serviced and guarded facilities. A side effect of this - or maybe in reality the main one? — was the emergence of an industry-specific infrastructure of law enforcement agencies, the formation of a core staff of employees who understand various sectors of the economy.

Approximately from the middle of the 1920s, departmental police units received the rights not only to protect objects, but also to conduct search activities. Well, at the end of the 20s, when the NEP was curtailed and state property became almost the only legally permissible, the search activity of departmental police units became in fact an activity to suppress theft and other types of abuse on the part of workers and

government managers.

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Industrialization and collectivization have passed. The "pupated" mode. Control over society has acquired a total character. The control over property became the same. relationship to property, to simplify, it came down mainly to two operations - extortion by the state of everything that could be confiscated from citizens. And the attempts of citizens to

pinch off a piece of the state pie. Naturally, when "everything around is collective farm, everything around is mine," the scale of the theft of state (socialist, collective farm, public - whatever you call it, the essence is the same) property could not help but increase.

The Soviet principle of combating the phenomenon required the creation of a centralized body for these purposes. And he was created. On March 16, 1937, by order of the NKVD No. 0018, the Department for Combating theft of Socialist Property and Speculation was formed as part of the Main Police Department of the NKVD of the USSR - OBKhSS GUM NKVD of the USSR, with numerous divisions in the field. Employees of departmental police units also joined their composition. As was formulated in the "Regulations" on the OBKhSS, this body was created "to ensure the fight against theft of socialist property in organizations and institutions of state trade, consumer, industrial and disabled cooperation, procurement

Attitude
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authorities and savings banks, as well as to combat speculation.

In the future, the department changed its name and subordination a couple of times. By the end of the 1980s, these were departments for combating the theft of socialist property within the union and republican ministries of internal affairs. According to the 1983 regulation on the divisions of the BHSS, the fight against theft, bribery, illegal foreign exchange transactions and speculation became the priority areas of their activity. Particular emphasis was to be placed on the detection of major and well-disguised crimes, as well as on operational work.

1.

What does operational work mean? Let's go straight to the source. Remember, at the very beginning I talked about Vladimir Dorofeev, a retired esnik who lives in a dacha in the Moscow region, drives an old Volga? Who has a healthy dog, a German Shepherd? I'll tell you right away. This case is not quite typical. At one time, Dorofeev held one of the key positions in the department for combating embezzlers and speculators. The peak of his career came in 1980-1986. At that time, a special unit was created in the central office of the BHSS of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs - the operational-search unit (ORCh), designed to investigate significant economic prestige.

steps, with which, due to various circumstances

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local authorities failed. Dorofeev headed one of its departments. He was one of those who

complained about the system.

What was he doing? The ORC collected information on complex cases involving high-ranking officials or party organs. The investigation on the ground began to slow down. And then specialists from the Center were taken to work, and a brigade, staffed by ORC employees and employees of departments from other regions, went to the region - if they went to Stavropol, then people were taken from Krasnoyarsk, etc.

In some cases, cases were initiated on the basis of information directly from the OHR, for example, if the defendants were high-ranking officials of the union ministries and other state institutions. And the "roof" in Moscow was found in almost all major cases. It was to Moscow, to the central office, that in the end the couriers carried suitcases in person. But in order to unravel the chains of cases of guild workers, large speculators and embezzlers, the employees of the ORCH still had to go to the places.

"Theft on an especially large scale" - it was with this article that Dorofeev and his colleagues usually sought to qualify the identified crimes. Everything else - speculation, illegal private enterprise, went as accompanying articles. It was enough to prove the theft, and everything else was no longer necessary.

As a rule, economically illiterate, random people conduct investigations in the MVD-ATC on the ground. Yesterday he, the investigator, engaged in rape, and today he is assigned to unravel

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economic "tangle". And when you talk to him during the investigation, you see that he does not understand you at all. He looks at you and interprets: "And you, Sherman, what were you doing there? LDK-sovkhoz were settled by invoicing. LDK poisoned the forest and sawmill materials. Well, what are you doing there? You start to explain to him what a decentralized MTS is, he doesn't understand anything! He does not understand that since all the work is unscheduled, unfunded, there are no documents for loading and unloading operations. I was a private and unofficial person. He had the 1st disability group without the right to employment. The personnel officers could not hire me either at the LDK or at the state farm. In the verdict, they rewrite from the indictment: the state farms and the LDK settled accounts among themselves according to the billing, and Sherman and Shi

the cash received was embezzled by others.

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

"If the case ended well, two or three people were sentenced to the death penalty," says Dorofeev. One of those "well-ended" cases was an operation against a shop for illegal tailoring in the village of Apsua in Karachay-Cherkessia. It resulted in three executions.

2.

The essence of business, as in most of this kind of business in the Soviet Union, was simple. An additional illegal production was opened at the state clothing factory that existed in the village. The same seamstresses worked there and in the same workshops. Just a hundred for the "left" goods, they were paid extra money that was not bad at that time. For tailoring a raincoat, for example

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rubles. They mainly sewed outerwear (raincoats, jackets, etc.) from natural and artificial leather. Raw materials were supplied by Chechen partners. They are part of it

but they made themselves in underground tanneries, partly taken from factories. At the helm of the business was a certain Kabeladze, a Georgian. There were also two top managers - Georgians and Chechens.

The business had several of its own points of sale in the markets of the cities of the North Caucasus, things were also sold through state stores. In order to bring goods into the legal commodity network, Kabeladze developed a dual document circulation system. When a consignment of goods was shipped from the factory, two waybills were attached to it - one took into account the real amount of goods, the second - only the official one. That is, while the goods went to the store, it was completely legal. However, once in the store, the left, illegal part of the goods disappeared from the official document circulation. The cash proceeds from its sale were divided between the owners of the workshop and the directors of the stores through which the sale was carried out.

Products were exported in large quantities on ZIL - 1000-1500 raincoats and coats each. The cost of each batch exceeded 10,000 rubles. From a certain moment, each such "walker" passed under the control of Dorofeev's employees. In total, several dozen people were involved in the operation. The headquarters was located 50 kilometers from the village, in Nevinnomyssk. In the same place, occupying half of the hotel, whether the employees involved in the operation lived. Every day they went to the village and occupied posts for observation.

niya.

Several people sat down on the slope of the overhanging above the village of the mountain. There, armed with an army rangefinder with a camera, they recorded the numbers of each car leaving the village. Other employees, having got jobs at the local state farm, hoed the fields next to the factory and along the road. And when the goods were loaded, they recorded the number of bales that were stacked in trucks. In each bale, as it was known from undercover sources, there were 10 jackets or five raincoats.

The loaded car was escorted to its destination - Minvod, Stavropol, Pyatigorsk, etc. There they observed and photographed the unloading process at the store or in the market. Then other employees of the group, armed with certificates of the Home Control Committee, came to the shops and checked

how many goods came to the shops from the shop.

Why didn't Dorofeev immediately close the shop? He waited. I was waiting for the moment when the amount of evidence collected would allow us to apply the very article on embezzlement on an especially large scale. During this time, the village was literally entwined with a network of informers and whistleblowers. Suffice it to say - the brother of the driver, who was exporting the factory's products at ZIL, informed the EHSS officers about where and how much goods the brother had delivered today.

The importation of goods took place mainly on Fridays, on the eve of busy Sunday trade. On one Friday, Dorofeev decided to act. At the market in Pyatigorsk, after the car from Apsua had been unloaded, the policemen arrested both the driver and sold

tsov who drove up to pick up the goods. During the search

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a large amount of cash was found - about 50,000 rubles. This made it possible to arrange a convincing red-handed arrest. The operation has reached a decisive stage.

3.

A platoon of machine gunners was called from Pyatigorsk. A cordon was set up around the factory, everyone inside was detained, a search and interrogations began. Seamstresses, mostly local, Circassians, testify pon chalu refused. Then Dorofeev ordered first to put pressure on the foremen and seniors in the shops. They agreed to cooperate and talked to the others. What happened next was a matter of technique. A dozen and a half Dorofeev's employees took evidence right in the shops. Things were going on as usual. Standard questions were asked: how much and who paid for the work, who gave out the materials, who took away the finished products, how many of them were made in total. Relevant were the answers, without heartbreaking details.

Outside, meanwhile, a real detective broke out. The second person in business approached the gates of the factory - the chief engineer of the factory, Dadunashvili. Finding the policemen and the cordon, he rushed to his brand new white Volga, where the driver was sitting, reading a newspaper. Shouted to him - "drive!" "Volga" with a squeal on the lids jerked from its place. The obekhaesniks who saw all this were at first dumbfounded, then they realized what was what, and on the chase began.

Dorofeev recalls that Dadunashvili, leaving the police cars, threw money out the window of the Volga.

It seems that he came to the factory with a large amount of personal money, or they just lay in his car ... Be that as it may, the first impulse of the shop worker, who realized what was happening, was to get rid of cash as soon as possible. Money burned his hands and could literally cost his life. Throwing chervonets and fifty dollars out the window, he deprived Dorofeev of material evidence for the very article about "especially large amounts."

But as Dorofeev now recalls quite enough, Dadunashvili did not succeed in anything. He was arrested almost immediately. The money was carefully collected. At the trial, the cost of damage caused to the state by a group of robbers was estimated at more than 800,000 rubles. The chief engineer of the factory in Apsua and two others received the most severe sentence - "the death penalty, execution." In total, about 70 people were convicted in the case.

At Dorofeev's dacha, in a small room, a real archive is kept. He sorts through folders with yellowed sheets of paper. Having rummaged through the documents on the case of the garment factory in the village of Apsua, he extracts and unfolds a map that has been worn on the folds. He points with his finger the icon that indicates the observation point on the mountain, where employees with a rangefinder were sitting. Shows the arrows under which the directions and destinations of the export of goods are signed.

4.

Dorofeev recalls other things. In Vnukovo near Moscow, he covered the underground shoe shop, which was held by the Armenians. The products were sold through the

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Aeroflot watermen who delivered shoes throughout the USSR. In Latvia, Dorofeev unleashed a major case, the defendants of which were 2 deputy ministers, and a couple of dozen local leaders and police officers were arrested in connection with it. Along the way, a clothing workshop was closed, which had been functioning almost since the forties.

But most of Dorofeev's investigations took place in the Caucasus. In Gorky (today - Nizhny Novy Gorod), the OBKhSS confiscated a large batch of knitted wool sweaters. Dorofeev's department joined the case. He managed to unwind the entire chain and find the owners of illegal production at a factory in the Georgian town of Gordoban. In official production, wool was not used for production, and then the saved raw materials were used for the production of unrecorded products. The workshop was destroyed, the factory director died during the investigation from a heart attack. "Then they hung all the dogs on him," the former investigator grumbles.

Dorofeev set up a large underground clothing factory in Kabardino-Balkaria, on the outskirts of Nalchik. Through her, I came across a certain Babaev, one of the leaders of Rosshveyprom of the Ministry of Light Industry. He, according to Dorofeev, organized the workshops in batches. I just gave the factory director a command, that's all. The workshops created in this way paid Babaev a regular tribute. He passed the money upstairs. Dorofeev can talk about Babaev for hours. He, apparently, was an extraordinary person.

.... He himself was a guild worker in the Mineralnye Vody. I started with a meat processing plant. He was such a prominent and active person. When some commission from the Central Committee came, he arranged picnics, jokes

I knew a lot, I did barbecue well. He knew how to organize a company. The minister liked it.

Babaev illegally had several apartments, several wives in each apartment. He had 2 sons, he made a dissertation for each of them, arranged for directors at the plant. It was a businessman on a national scale. We almost took the rector of the Moscow Technological Institute of the Meat and Dairy Industry in this case. He had 4 diplomas, but they were all fake, he didn't even know how to write. They asked me to write a receipt: there are 20 errors in 2 lines

From the memoirs of Vladimir Dorofeev

The scale of the matter was such that it was taken under control by the Central Committee. About a dozen people were planted. Not a point stretched to the very top, surrounded by Brezhnev. However, Dorofeev was not allowed to complete the investigation. This, however, happened almost every time when a really serious matter fell into his hands. So it happened with his "favorite" business in the village of Apsua. Dorofeev and his "team" did not have time to finish interrogating all the witnesses, as they were recalled to Moscow.

The reasons soon became clear. The head of the BHSS department has changed. The new leadership, as Dorofeev now claims, was connected with del
tsami who organized illegal production in the village. Or rather, with large Georgian shadowy bigwigs, with the help of which the workshop was launched at one time. It was not possible to ruin the case at all - Dorofeev managed to collect a sufficient amount of materials. However, its scale failed seriously su
zit.

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An honest campaigner, a real fan of what he has been doing all his life, Dorofeev is still seething with indignation. Does he understand that the phenomena with which he fought were simply impossible to defeat? That illegal business, private enterprise in its most ugly forms, which became such thanks to the "roof" of the state, were part of the system? And his role, like the role of all honest fighters, was only to support the punitive component of state policy towards the private trader. At the same time, with the other hand, unofficially and without advertising this fact, the then state (or rather, the established system of relations) supported business in the USSR.

Dorofeev's less principled, or let's say, "frozen" colleagues, were more realistic. Ivan Skorodelov, a retired police major general who worked in the Department of Internal Affairs of the Moscow City Executive Committee in the 1970s and 1980s, today says that he maintained quite normal human relations with many of his then wards. To one of them, whom he tried several times, but did not manage to plant, Skorodelov, for example, periodically visits Israel, where he moved in the 90s.

How else? To you
to lead to clean water speculators,
plunderers, shop workers and others,
Skorodelova

Illegal
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sources were needed in their midst. "Agents" were needed, people who, on the one hand, enjoy the trust of business counterparties, and, on the other hand, transmit information to the authorities. To meet these requirements, agents had to conduct private business activities. Of course, Skorodelov recalls, they gave a subscription and pledged not to violate

the law. But in reality, of course, they were engaged in both speculation and fartsovka.

Work for OBHSS
already agreed
quite "accomplished"
businessmen caught
on hot, or
calculating
thus in advance
lay a straw, protect
yourself from possible
consequences.

More often, it happened that already quite "established" businessmen agreed to work for the OBKhSS, caught on the "hot", or hoping in this way to put a straw in

advance, to protect themselves from possible consequences. Be that as it may, there was a significant stratum of businessmen who worked on semi-legal grounds, what is called under the "roof". Many of them have been in this status for years. Some of them really periodically handed over their colleagues, most often competitors. And in some cases it was just banal corruption, beneficial to both parties. After all, the obekhaesniks, like all Soviet people, were forced to look for ways to get good clothes, food, cars, etc. Here, all of this appeared as if by itself.

Corruption in the BHSS bodies was a common occurrence even in Moscow. The same money changers Rokotov and

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Faibishenko therefore

stayed so long

vulnerable that they paid

their friends in OBHSS.

Konstantin Simis, who

emigrated to the United

States in the 1970s and

before that worked as a lawyer in Moscow,

recalls that one

his clients, the Moscow

guild worker Solomon

Zilber, together with his older brother, transferred from

5,000 to 10,000 rubles a month to employees of the

OBKhSS of various ranks.

law enforcement

organs, as well as practically

the entire state

apparatus in the south

republics of the Union,

mutated into a mechanism

for extraction

"administrative

rent" from the social

active citizens.

And what happened in the southern republics! Simis writes that during the trial of Otar Lazishvili, one of the largest Georgian guild workers, a list of bribe recipients found during a search was made public. It contains hundreds of names. It began with employees of the local police department. It included almost the entire leadership of the republican OBKhSS, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Procurator of the Georgian SSR. And that's not to mention the legend (or is it true?!) that Lazishvili gave a fabulous ring to the wife of Vasily Mzhavanadze, until 1973 the head of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR.

6.

Eduard Shevardnadze, who replaced Mzhavanadze as the head of the republic, carried out a big "purge" in Georgia in the first half of the 70s. Five years in prison

about 30,000 people went. About 40,000 people were dismissed from party and economic positions. But the efforts of Shevardnadze did not have a long-term effect. New ones took the place of the deposed or imprisoned corrupt officials. That's how the system worked.

Law enforcement agencies, like almost the entire state apparatus in the southern republics of the Union, where the entrepreneurial activity of the population was the highest, mutated into a mechanism for extracting "administrative rent" from those socially active citizens who, in the conditions of a formally 100% state economy, learned to earn good money

poke.

How did the gears spin? All this is described in detail by Ilya Zemtsov - with figures and "live" stories. And I will add that this is an extremely informative read for anyone who wants to understand today's Russian realities.

CHAPTER V

The morals of the "milkers"

"...Thus, I tied up the interested enterprises in direct economic exchange. And of course, the party Soviet organizations were well aware of this: the district committees of the CPC (Communist Party of Kazakhstan. - *M.K.*), district executive committees, the agricultural administration, and some secretaries of the RCP at ..., .., .. This meant participation in my themselves activities, such as I just want to say that everyone, absolutely everyone knew, approved, empowered, received, built...

But I don't know who and what kind of wasp stung. I can only guess. For as soon as the leadership of the party regional committee in Kustanai changed, this rope spun over my head.

A beautifully staged work was

ruined for the sake of

partyocracy and careerism.

In March 1981, Sechen

Andrey Mikhailovich Borodin,
the secretary of the Kustanai
regional committee of the
Communist Party of China
(namely, he invited me and
blessed me to the MTS (material
and technical supply. - *M.K.*) region). Now secretary

Feeding system
local
"partkhozaktiv"
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forms.

became the eternal envious and rival of A.M. Borodin from the neighboring Petropavlovsk region V.S. Demidenko. This young, talented liar and careerist immediately began to put things in order. Like, at Borodin everything was done criminally.

He arrested the director of the worsted and cloth factory B.K. Zapotny. Then he arrested the son-in-law A.M. Borodin, director of the collective farm "Red Partisan" L.I. Pereverzeva. Then - the head of Taran, etc. All were sentenced to various terms. He broke all the greenhouses in the city, forbade the sale of grown vegetables, defining it as speculation. In general, it became "put things in order"...

On April 23, 1981, I was also arrested at my apartment in Kurgan ...
"

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

One of the moments that struck me the most in Zemtsov's book was the system he described for feeding the local "party economic activists" from all kinds of entrepreneurial, and even just thieves and corruption activities, which by the beginning of the 70s in Soviet Azerbaijan had acquired completely finished forms. .

1.

The main character here is the secretaries of the Paradise Committees. This is the level of management of the average "corporation". They are aware of what is happening in their jurisdiction. An analogue from modern Russian practice is the heads of district administrations in Moscow, for example. All any noticeable (in other words, monetary) processes cannot pass by them. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, they, as representatives of

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On my first floor of the pyramid of power lies the function of managing the "taxable class", its "haircut", the transfer of income upwards. About the "practices" and "standards of behavior" that existed in this layer, Zemtsov writes with knowledge of the matter, as a person who has been moving in this environment for a long time.

From his words it follows that a lot of money is deposited in the pockets of these people. Perhaps the administrative rent brings them even more than those who are directly involved in business. At the same

time, they are deputies of the Soviets of various levels, up to the Supreme. In addition to money, they have status. They are the backbone of the system. This imposes certain obligations. Although they despise everything related to the official ideology and consider it just empty mantras, nevertheless it is necessary, at least formally, to comply with the norms accepted in Soviet society. Perform rituals that have long become unnecessary.

lowered from above plans are, of course, fiction. But if the plans not fulfilled -

heads may roll. So you need something to do with statistics, to correct something, to paint on something. And this is a risk.

Their life is full of unpleasant troubles and responsibilities. The production and production plans lowered from above the socio-economic development of the territories entrusted to them is, of course, a fiction. Linden, not related to reality. But if the plans are not fulfilled, heads may roll. So, we need to do something with the statistics, correct something, paint on something. And this is a risk. Will it suddenly pop up?

From time to time there are commissions, checks. Or suddenly - another reform. Or a campaign to fight for or against something. Either strengthening discipline, or increasing economic independence. Or here are the elections. The procedure is senseless—in any case, the “indestructible bloc of the CPSU and the non-Party people” will win, but all the same, it is necessary to fuss. And again, I can't help but notice - isn't it very similar to the realities of modern Russia? Government campaigns for modernization and innovation, elections at all levels, where United Russia "wins" and so on,

what you don't need to talk about - you just need to look back at circle?

But, returning to Zemtsov's description of the life of the ruling class of the AzSSR, the most offensive thing of all is that although there are people around - some pay you, others pay you - there is a habit from time to time to dismiss the secretaries of district committees if their deeds get too scandalous publicity. Or rather, they are moved: from the nomenclature of the Central Committee, they, as a rule, do not fall out.

Zemtsov cites several characteristic stories. A certain Marudaliyev, the first secretary of the Narimanov district committee of the city of Baku, "burned out on the postscript" was transferred to the ministers of consumer services.

The first secretary of the Oktyabrsky district committee of the city of Baku, Mammadov, "stumbled" on unearned income - in Moscow, he imprudently deposited 195,000 rubles in the savings bank in the name of his wife. Transferred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs as head of the city paramilitary guard. And this caused a shock in the "get-together" - those who

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Mal Mamedov, as everyone knew, were not tramps at all. And what is the amount - 195,000 ?!

Zemtsov writes that it was something else. The then First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Veli Akhundov, did not forgive Magomedov's insolence: he too stubbornly resisted his resignation. In 1965, he even managed to convince members of the plenum of district committees to vote against the candidate proposed by Akhundov to take his place. Mammadov has since held out in the secretaries for a year, but then he experienced a rapid decline - he was deprived of his deputy, removed from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the AzSSR. If Mammadov had not been such a recalcitrant, everything would have happened much more smoothly.

And here is a case of the opposite kind - with the first secretary of the Baku City Committee Allahverdiyev. As the investigation found out, he bought gold from the Jan Rokotov, a foreign exchange clerk in 1962. However, having been caught in the middle, the apparatchik humbly accepted the punishment. And everything ended well. After some time, Allahverdiyev "surfaced" as head of the State Committee for Vocational Training under the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan.

Nasrullaev, who replaced Allahverdiev as the first secretary of the city party organization, slipped and was completely stupid. The daughter of a famous scientist was raped in Baku. The investigation came to the trail of a full brothel. Nasrullaev turned out to be among his regular clients. And not just one - five more members of the Republican Central Committee and three ministers. What's next? A couple of years later, Nasrullaev was appointed Minister of Communications of the republic.

The main rule is that you are criticized, punished, but you do not make excuses, repent. The main thing is no

resistance. Then it can still dissolve. Bulaev, the secretary of the Sabirabad district committee of the party, found out that his place had been sold. Meanwhile, according to the concepts of the then republican party elite, you are "live" positions, it seems, like buying up

should not.

While you are in the saddle, you enjoy the trust of your superiors - no one can buy your chair. The position is vacated only after the "fall". Then the game begins - one hundred thousand, one hundred and twenty thousand! Who is bigger? But Bulaev worked diligently, paid the Central Committee on time, and was in good standing. And here on you.

Zemtsov explains the incident by the fact that a wealthy neighbor, the first secretary of the committee of the neighboring district, paid 300,000 rubles to a certain Bagirov, who at that time was in charge of personnel in the republican party organization. And so Bulaev was offered to leave. Not

justice is obvious.

Another would have rushed to scribble complaints and break into the waiting rooms of patron friends. But Bulaev was silent about it. I realized that what had happened would not have been possible

According to the concepts
the then Republican
party elites - "live" positions
seem to be
should not be overdone.

without the sanction of the
head of the republic, Akhundov. Yes and
experience has shown no
gotta make a fuss. Well, he did
the right thing. Less than a year
later, Bula

Ev was given the post of first
secretary of the district committee in another district. And what was most
surprising and impossible for Azerbaijan at that time was completely free.

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2.

All these intimate details of the party-private partnership, which Zemtsov described in colors in his book, became known to him for a reason. The future political migrant was one of the active participants in the replacement of Akhundov, who had become fed up with Moscow by that time, with Heydar Aliyev.

Aliyev, a KGB cadre officer, young, energetic, strong-willed, seemed to Brezhnev a worthy candidate to restore order in Azerbaijan, mired in corruption. Tons of compromising evidence were collected against Akhundov and the people he dragged to the heights of republican power.

Zemtsov, being the head of a department in the secretary of the republican party organization, helped Aliyev structure this information and put it in the right direction. And four years later, he came to his former patron and asked for a favor - to help in organizing the departure. Aliyev helped. Then, writes Zemtsov, there was a freeway, wide and straight, like a runway. And the runway is like a freeway. In Munich, he was asked: "Is the situation in Azerbaijan not like Watergate?" What could he say in response? In Europe, they have a very vague idea of what is happening in Russia, - Zemtsov later wrote with annoyance in his book.

But for Zemtsov himself, the picture emerged extremely clear. At least in relation to Azerbaijan in the late 60s - early 70s. Party cadres

and the system of appointment to "feeding" positions - in the hands of the head of the department head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Bagirov. Here are his tariffs - the first secretary of the district committee

"worth" from 200,000 rubles. The second - from 100,000 rubles. The village (state farms, collective farms) is the absolute patrimony of the secretary of the Central Committee, Seyidov. Rates: chairman of a collective farm - 50,000 rubles, director of a state farm - 80,000 rubles.

Industry is under the jurisdiction of the secretary of the Central Committee, Amirov. He distributed the positions of directors of plants and factories at a price of 10,000 to 100,000 rubles. Culture, science, art are in the hands of the secretary of the Central Committee Jafarov. The title of academician - 50,000 rubles, the position of director of the institute - 40,000 rubles. Rector of the university - up to 200,000 rubles. Director of the theater - opera, drama, young spectators - 10,000 - 30,000 rubles.

If desired, and under a certain set of circumstances, it was also possible to purchase the position of a "seller of positions". Chair of the Minister of Trade - 250,000 rubles. The post of Minister of Public Utilities - 150,000 rubles. The Ministry of Social Security with all its dozens of workshops at the societies of the blind and deaf and dumb - 120,000 rubles. These figures were cited in his devastating speech by Heydar Aliyev, who had just been appointed head of the republican party organization, at a closed plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. Tellingly, a decade later, the system remained the same. Aliyev's people, having settled down in warm places, readily adopted the experience of their predecessors.

If desired
and certain
coincidence
it was also possible to buy
positions of a salesperson
positions."

Of course, all these colorful
details with fixed tariff rates are
rather an attribute of the

ions of the Soviet "soft
underbelly of the USSR "- For
the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Chapter V

In the RSFSR, in the industrial regions of Ukraine and Kazakhstan, in Belarus - the core of the Union, corruption did not take such brightly colored forms. But on the other hand, in the Krasnodar Territory, in the garages of the secretaries of the regional committee, cans of gold were found during searches. And if we recall the famous Uzbek "cotton business", then it is clear that really big money went to Moscow. And there they settled somewhere.

3.

As for me personally, in Zemtsov's description of the order of Azerbaijan during the time of Akhundov, I will say it again, there is a striking resemblance to what is happening in modern times. exchange Russia. The same "corporation" of officials and security forces. The same mechanisms for the withdrawal of "administrative rent". One to one rotation of "responsible employees" is not for theft and disastrous outcomes gi management, but for actions that are in conflict with the "corporate" norms and the whims of the authorities.

Do you remember the story of 2010, when Major Denis Yevsyukov, head of the Tsaritsyno police department, shot 9 people in the Ostrov supermarket in the capital? Then, due to public interest in the state of affairs in the bodies of the DMV, some figures surfaced. Everyone, if you remember, was keenly interested in the question - what is Evsyukov doing that drives around in luxury foreign cars and has enough income to provide a wild life for his wife, the former soloist of the Strelka group, accustomed to big money? There were answers to this seemingly rhetorical question. I will give one of them, quite, from my point of view, adequate.

"In the Moscow region, a general's position (meaning a police general. - M.K.) and a title cost about a million dollars. How do I know this? We also have a trade union in the region. So guys

To work in underground, necessary enlist support inspectors. In the Moscow region "roof" for the casino gave themselves the main "verifiers" - people from the regional prosecutor's office.

they said that one of department heads saved money to Major General. He did not hesitate to say: he scored 100 thousand dollars, but half a million is needed. It's in the area. In the capital, I think, twice as expensive. But that regional chief created a real chaos in the department, we made these facts public, and he lost what he had accumulated ... Well, the general, of course, needs to recapture this money. It has, for example, 10 departments. Roughly speaking, to the position paid off in a year, he has to collect 100 thousand from each head of the department. Well, you also need to live the same way, so they still have to leave the same amount to themselves, dear ones. That kind of arithmetic. Maybe I'm wrong, but apparently only to the downside."

*Chairman of the coordinating council of the trade union of police officers in Moscow
Mikhail Pashkin, in an interview with Izvestia*

Where do policemen get money to pay for their position? Yes, from the same place as their Azerbaijani "colleagues" in the 70-80s - mainly from small businessmen. Those who work in their territory. From stalls, shops, warehouses, workshops, etc. A separate source of income is the "protection" of an obviously illegal business. Dens, underground gambling establishments.

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With gambling establishments, by the way, it turns out very interesting. As you know, they were banned in Russia in 2008. Rather, they were allowed, but only in specially designated places for this - gambling zones. As many as four of them were appointed for the whole country - in Primorye, in Altai, in the Rostov and Kaliningrad regions. In the zones, of course, there was nothing built, not to mention the fact that none of the wealthy players was going to go there. Casinos where they were, they remained there - in the largest cities of Russia. They just went underground.

And in order to work underground, you need to enlist the support of inspectors. In the Moscow region, the "roof" for the casino was provided by the main "verifiers" themselves - people from the regional prosecutor's office. Who "protected" them themselves is still under investigation, but it is already known that Artem Chaika, the son of Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika, played an active role in the process. And how does this differ from the orders described by Zemtsov in Azerbaijan?

4.

Sometimes it's a surprise! - "purges" begin in the ranks of the modern Russian nomenklatura. The undercover struggle goes on for a long time, and now one of the pillars of the regime is collapsing. It has long been known that he has a snout in a cannon. That abuses flourish in the territory under their jurisdiction. Outrageous corruption. Otko you. All significant programs of socio-economic development have failed. And what do you think, loud the resignation occurred because at the top they suddenly realized

the entire depth of the fall on the ground? Not at all. A classic example is the situation with the dismissal of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

During the twenty years of his reign in Moscow, a system was formed, one to one similar to the one that flourished in "Akhundov" and then in "Aliyev" Azerbaijan. The city economy is divided into areas of responsibility, and each area has its own curator. In order to work calmly and feel safe from sudden raids by the security forces, it is necessary to share income with officials. Based on size

There is a caste of "milkers" - officials, security officials, inspectors. And there is "taxable" social group - everyone kind of merchants. "Businessmen" feed "power". And she gladly they are "milked".

of these incomes, the value of the "place" is determined. Mine almost everyone has a price tag - from the head of the district police department to the vice mayor.

Did the Kremlin know about this? Of course they were aware. But the command to deal with the abuses of officials associated with Luzhkov sounded only when the Moscow mayor himself refused to

voluntarily resign. Like the secretary of the Azerbaijan District Committee who opposed Akhundov's decision to replace him, Luzhkov reared up and tried to keep his seat (and I will add, the branched business of his wife Elena Baturina). "Sit down and don't lean out. If they criticize, shut up. Perhaps you will surface somewhere else, "Luzhkov did not

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accepted. He decided to fight, and the repressions immediately began.

It seems that in modern Russia, after digging around, you can find quite a few stories of this kind everywhere. May not be as loud. But there is only one scheme. There is a caste of "milkers" - officials, security officials, various kinds of inspectors. And there is a "taxable" social group - all kinds of businessmen. Relations between them are built according to the scheme described by Zemtsov - "merchants" feed "power". And she gladly "milks" them. And periodically throws up problems - sometimes checks, sometimes pinpoint "landings". To know their place.

A characteristic detail is that along with the change of leader, the "cleansing" of the territory under his jurisdiction begins. All those who used to sit in the grain places and enjoyed the most favorable treatment from the authorities (in exchange, of course, for reciprocal gratitude), suddenly find themselves involved, if not in criminal cases, then certainly in the investigations of the Accounts Chamber. These people of the past era are gradually "uprooted", and new generations come in their place.

swarm entrepreneurs. Those who are trusted by the new bosses, and who will pay this bosses for trust. Pay in the truest sense.

This is how the plot developed with the dismissal of Yuri Luzhkov from the post of mayor of Moscow. Following the "patron", all people close to him were expelled from the city business. This is exactly what happened to Mark Sherman, who in the early 1980s became the victim of a "personnel revolution" and the subsequent "big purge" in the Kustanai region. Well what can we say? History tends to repeat itself.

CHAPTER VI

six colors Soviet economy

But back to entrepreneurship in the USSR. Naturally, it was not limited to the underground production of goods. Rigid, overregulated, and not meeting the real needs of society, the Soviet planned economy created many opportunities for entrepreneurial people. After all, where there is demand, there inevitably appears supply. As a result, a bizarre combination of a "directive", planned economy with interspersed, and sometimes even entire "nests" of a private economy, emerges. Different parts of this "mosaic" function differently and have different status from the point of view of Soviet criminal law.

In this regard, it is worth turning to the work of another Soviet emigrant who left the USSR at about the same time as Zemtsov.

1.

Aron Katsenelinboigen. Born in 1927 in the town of Izyaslavl (Central Ukraine), on the territory of the former "Pale of Settlement". Where Jews were allowed to live in the Russian Empire. His father, Iosif Isakovich, came from a prominent rabbinical family and was preparing himself for a religious career. Naturally,

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in the conditions of the USSR in the 30s and 40s, such a career was not possible.

The Katsenelinboygens, like many Jews from Ukraine and Belarus, went to Moscow. Lived in Rostokino. Then it was the nearest suburb of Moscow, where residents kept cattle and mostly fed from vegetable gardens. They bought part of the barn adjoining the master's house and turned it into a room. More precisely, in a closet with an area of about 8 square meters.

Joseph had no secular education. It was difficult to write in Russian. He managed to get a job only as a peddler of telegrams. The family lived very poorly. But the son, Aaron, studied diligently. During the war they were evacuated to Samarkand. There, Aron entered the Samarkand Institute of National Economy, then transferred to the Moscow State Economic Institute, from which he graduated at the age of 19 in 1946.

He worked as an economist at industrial enterprises, and began to publish scientific papers on the planning and organization of labor. Since 1953 - an employee of the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Then he headed the department of affairs at the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute, was a professor at Moscow State University. Katsenelinboigen made a brilliant career as an economist in the USSR. He knew and worked together with the future Nobel Laureate Leonid Kantorovich.

However, in 1973, having fallen into disgrace with the Soviet scientific bosses, Katsenelinboigen emigrated. Settled in the USA. There he taught at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1978 he became a professor at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the best business schools in the world.

So, one of the first works published by Aron Katsenelinboigen after leaving the USSR was the article "Color markets and the Soviet economy", which analyzed the informal part of the Soviet economy. Since then, this study has become one of the textbooks on the problem of the Soviet economic underground. It is given additional weight by the fact that the author is by no means a dispassionate researcher. Katsenelinboigen is a direct witness and participant in many of the processes analyzed in this work.

Although he made a brilliant scientific career by Soviet standards, he was, as they say, aware of the realities. Including those that concerned private business in the USSR. To begin with, Aron's maternal grandfather Gersh Feldman was engaged in trade before the revolution and kept several shops. And during the NEP, he was able to turn around for real. And although his business was liquidated at the end of the 1920s, Gersh managed to save part of the capital in the form of gold coins of royal minting, which he then gradually sold off.

Aron Katsenelinboigen's father, who remained in Moscow, took up speculation in bread cards. He was arrested and spent several years in the camps. Having been released, he came to his family in Samarkand, where he "bought" a new passport, changing the year and place of birth. This gave him the opportunity to start a new life without mentioning the arrest. And the son-wunderkind - to make that very brilliant scientific career.

However, the career did not prevent Katsenelinboigen to have numerous acquaintances, as he himself writes, from "circles with 'unsustainable' business". One of them is a Samarkand friend Anatoly Rubin. At the age of 17, it was already a completely independent workshop. He came-

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got a loom. He rented a room for production and hired three workers. Those around the clock, in three shifts, dressed the fabric, a large shortage in wartime. Rubin's products were then sold on the market.

So Katsenelin Boigen wrote about the shadow Soviet economy not only as a theoretical economist, but also as a person who was closely acquainted with the practical side of the issue. And in his interpretation, shadow economic relations in the USSR do not at all look like an anomaly. On the contrary, it is one of the systemic components of the Soviet economic structure. Analyzing the Soviet experience, Katsenelinboigen comes to the conclusion that despite all the efforts of the authorities, the planned socialist system simply cannot exist without elements of the market, and hence without private initiative, entrepreneurship as its fundamental basis.

2.

In support of his views, yesterday's Soviet economist gave a detailed and orderly systematized description of the "market" part of the Soviet economy. He proceeded from the existence of three types of markets - legal, semi-legal and illegal. Each of them is divided in turn into subspecies, differing in the degree of legality and the subjects involved in market interaction.

For greater clarity, Katsenelinboigen gave markets named after colors reflecting the attitude of the authorities to their existence. The official, legal market was called "Red", completely illegal - "Black".

BUSINESS IN THE USSR

[illegible]

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Brown				Black				

legal markets. To simplify, Katsenelinboigen calls the system of state retail trade a "red" market. Here the degree of private initiative tends to zero.

The researcher calls the "pink" market the sale of goods that I buy through a system of commission shops and buyouts. Here, in contrast to state trade, there are already traces of entrepreneurial activity - after all, the assortment and prices in this system form

It's not the state that does it, but the citizens.

"People living in the USSR, like Homo Sapiens in general, are capable of making mistakes. They may make mistakes when buying certain things. The failure of a purchase can often be discovered after the item has been used several times. Since it is often impossible to return purchased items to the store, the buyer can correct the mistake only by selling the unsuccessfully purchased item to people who need it," writes Katsenelinboigen. In other words, in any society where the consumption of mass-produced goods is developed, an increase in

the emergence of the secondary market for these goods.

The Soviet state sought to control this market. This was the reason for the creation of commissions. Citizens had to sell clothes, furniture, books and other things to each other through the mediation of state structures. The number of commission shops was relatively small - in Moscow, for example, there were several dozen of them. The commission margin on goods was about 7% of the sale price. Thus, the costs of maintaining the trading network were covered. And it seemed fair. Not like the hucksters who

chili resale prices several times.

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At the same time, commission stores were completely insured against losses that may arise due to the unrealizability of the goods. In modern terms, they only took goods for sale - the money for the item handed over for commission was issued a few days after its sale. In order to prevent stolen items and privately produced goods from entering the commission system, the items that were handed over were registered on the basis of the presented passport.

Where is entrepreneurship in this? In contrast to the usual network of state stores, prices in commission shops were set by the employees of the store itself. Prices could fall arbitrarily quickly if there was no demand for the goods transferred for commission. Of course, the store carried out price cuts after

agreement with the person selling the goods.

In addition to commissions, in the USSR there are also functions buying up shops, the so-called buying up. There, unlike commissions, the money for the item handed over could be received immediately. Then the delivered goods were sold to other buyers. Because the store took the risk of selling, the person selling the item received an amount substantially lower than the selling price. The difference between the selling price of a buying shop and the amount received by the person selling the thing could fluctuate depending on the demand for this thing.

Both commission and buying were state-owned stores, and were created in order to correct and control the actions of consumers in the right direction. From this point of view, they looked like ordinary state-owned "red" market stores. But, and this

The main difference was that store employees had the right to set their own prices. This circumstance created great opportunities for the illegal increase in the income of their employees.

The third and last type of the legal Soviet market, according to Katsene linboigen's classification, as he called it - "white", was characterized by the fact that the owner of the goods acted as a seller directly. Goods, if generalized, could be of two types - durables and foodstuffs. Food and consumer goods formed completely different markets in terms of functioning mechanisms.

Durable goods - clothes, shoes, furniture, appliances, etc. - was sold by their owners at the so-called flea markets, open markets allowed in large cities. The

"White" market for the Soviet planned economy created the greatest inconvenience from all legal.

Prices here established practically uncontrollably.

administration of the markets had to ensure that new things were not resold in the territory under their jurisdiction - they had to be returned to the state store at the place of purchase or to the thrift store. In case the markets became

too conspicuous centers of illegal trade, they were simply closed. So it was in the 1950s in Moscow, when the powerful Perovskaya flea market was closed. In 1975, a similar market was closed in Kyiv, bearing the title "Cloud".

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In the second case, we are talking about the so-called collective farm markets. There, private individuals had the right to sell agricultural products grown in private gardens (as well as received for workdays on collective farms). Prices here were regulated minimally, their level exceeded the prices for the same goods in state stores two or three times.

The "white" market for the Soviet planned economy created the greatest inconvenience of all the legal ones. Prices here were set almost without control. There were excellent opportunities for the notorious unearned income. However, as the authorities clearly understood, it was simply impossible to refuse it - the food market would then become completely illegal. As well as completely gone "into the shadows" and operations with the resale of durable goods use.

A characteristic detail noted by Katsenelinboigen is that for Soviet peasants, due to the low efficiency of agriculture, personal time was such a cheap type of resource that it was

it is more profitable to spend it on personal participation in retail sales of products than to lose part of the income, but reduce the loss of time by selling products through intermediary wholesale

trading structures.

As a result, trading operations did not rise above the level of primitive "medieval" fair trade. Revolution

Modern
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in the retail trade that took place in the second half of the 20th century — modern trade formats, supermarkets, hypermarkets, etc., which made it possible to radically reduce the trade margin, naturally passed by the USSR. And not only past the state economy, but also the private sector. How else? After all, trade itself is an intermediary between driver and buyer, was called “speculation” in Soviet criminal law and was punishable by a very serious punishment - up to seven years with confiscation of property.

3.

semi-legal markets. But forbidden doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Entire shadow private industries existed in the Soviet economy. They produced goods and services that were permitted by law. Forms within which this production worked were illegal. Katsenelinboigen called such markets “gray” – here “goods are state-allowed personal consumption items (and services) that are “taken” there to their rightful owners and sold. The illegality of these operations lay in the fact that the resulting transactions had an “unofficial” character. They were not registered anywhere and were committed without the knowledge of the state. Although they were relatively “harmless”.

The classic example is the rental of real estate. On the one hand, there was a strong demand for renting apartments and rooms in large cities. Students, newlyweds, divorcees, etc. required

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separate living space. On the other hand, the state did not provide such a service. Only non-residents could live in hotels or hostels.

Result: a shadow market was formed, that is, a market that was not controlled and little noticed by the authorities. People rented apartments, moving to relatives. Or, they “condensed” in their own apartment and released one of the rooms for rent. In different ways, but housing for rent appeared on the market.

How did people find out about renting apartments and rooms? Most often - through friends, acquaintances or through ads. However, there was also a

specialized "market" infrastructure. As Katsenelin Boigen writes, quite a long time ago, in large cities, places appeared (usually near exchange offices) in which people who rent out living space and look for it informally gather.

At the same time, unlike the official state rent, which did not depend on the district, the availability of an elevator, etc., the prices for rented on the “gray” market living space, as well as any market prices, of course, took into account the qualitative parameters of rented housing. In Moscow, a separate one-room apartment with all conveniences (gas, electricity, sewerage, bathroom) in an area close to a metro station could cost about

Unlike the official state rent, which did not depend on area, availability of an elevator and etc., prices for leased "gray" market housing, take into account quality parameters of the leased housing.

600 rubles a year (the average annual salary in the USSR was estimated at about 2,000 rubles). And that room (in the apartment where the family renting this room lives) next to the metro costs about 350 rubles a year.

Renovation of apartments and construction by brigades of shabashniks, tailoring, repairing household appliances - the scarcity of choice and the inferiority of the services provided by the state left room for the private trader. Take, for example, the flower market - in the form in which it was formed in the USSR by the 70s of the last century.

The prerequisite for the creation of a powerful semi-legal private sector here, as it usually happened, was the lack of an adequate supply from the official economy. Kolkhoz markets, where flower trade was allowed, were located, as a rule, far from busy places in the city center. Behind

They closed at six o'clock in the evening - just in time for the greatest demand. There is no need to talk about state flower kiosks. There were few of them, and it was impossible not to look at what was sold there without tears.

Maybe.

The deficit was made up by numerous private traders, mostly women - it was more difficult to accuse them of that intoxication. Places for private trade were formed mostly spontaneously. The police occasionally chased the merchants away, but on the whole the business functioned stably.

There were, by and large, two sources of flowers for private sale. Supplies from the southern regions (mainly from Transcaucasia) and flowers grown by residents of the suburbs with household plots. And if the cultivation of flowers by private traders in the suburban areas of large cities remained the lot of singles, then

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flower rates from the "souths" have grown into a fairly large business. Some grew flowers. The second - large wholesalers - resold them. Still others - residents of Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv or immigrants from the Transcaucasian republics who moved to large cities of the USSR, traded them.

There were no mass repressions against participants in the flower business in the USSR - it seems that the service they provided was considered socially useful. However, the official attitude towards this kind of practice was negative. Characteristic in this respect is the devastating article in *Literaturka*, published in the early 70s, where flower growers from the suburbs, who erected greenhouses on their plots and were engaged in private production, were smashed.

production.

What other markets existed in the "scoop"? Education, healthcare, apartment renovation. Take what you call my tutoring. It is known that it was almost impossible to learn a foreign language at a decent level in a secondary Soviet school. Meanwhile, beginning in the 1960s, the Soviet intelligentsia en masse tried to give children a language. Partly for admission to universities, partly for reasons of social prestige.

mass repression
in a relationship
flower
business in the USSR
undertaken -
provided by them
service was considered
socially useful.

As a rule, such classes were held with private teachers. Their average fee is 3 rubles per academic hour. This is about 2.5 times higher than the payment

foreign language teacher at school. Private teachers were also in demand to prepare children for university and other subjects. Depending on qualifications, a tutor's income could reach 10 rubles per hour per student. Engaged in such a private teaching figure

Mostly teachers of universities and schools, as well as students. For them, this activity is very significant source of income.

A gray market has also developed in the field of health care. Theoretically, doctors were supposed to serve patients according to the territorial principle. People from neighboring houses went to the polyclinic, to the district hospital - from

Participants of semi-legal markets, even doing quite respectable activities, often violated the most severe prohibitions imposed in the USSR for private enterprise activities.

the settlements of the district. Etc. However, the best doctors and equipment were often concentrated in hospitals at universities or research institutes. To get there, an appropriate referral from the territorial medical institutions was required.

As a result, "chains" of acquaintances were formed, through which patients (or their relatives) could organize, by paying a certain amount, treatment by more qualified doctors.

Price order? Up to 150 rubles for an operation or 25 rubles for a private home visit. And this is not a payment as a thank you for good treatment, but a payment for the doctor's consent to prefer this patient. After all, the cost of

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operation, equipment, medicines are covered by public funds.

All this diversity of life forms Katsenelinboy gene places in the zone of the "gray" market. That is, in principle, of course, illegal. But quite, from the point of view of the authorities, harmless.

However, here it is difficult to agree with the author of the theory of Soviet color markets. In reality, of course, participants in semi-legal markets operated not only in the "gray" zone. Even while engaging in completely honest activities, they often violated the most severe prohibitions introduced in the USSR for private business activities. Life, after all, is more complicated than invented schemes. In order not to be unfounded, I will give a specific example - the story of a Moscow private dentist.

4.

Warning in advance skeptical grins - no, this is not a literary hero, invented by me personally. Her name was Maria Alekseevna, born in 1913. She is the grandmother of a friend of mine, a well-known journalist and at one time a popular TV presenter. For sure you saw her on the "box". And if in that

iii, what I want to tell you, and there are exaggerations, they are not on my conscience. Some just managed to become a family tradition. And it's almost epic. After all, it is difficult to demand objectivity from the epic?

Whatever it was, but the woman, which will be discussed, was engaged in dental prosthetics. She took it to her apartment. More precisely, in the kitchen, where

there was a real dental chair. When a client came in, the chair and all the other equipment was put forward in the center of the kitchen. When there were no customers, the kitchen turned into a kitchen again. As in an IKEA advertisement - unlimited possibilities for transforming personal space.

Why did people go to our heroine's house? Yes, by the fact that in a different way, in general, it did not work out. To understand why, we, accustomed to the fact that the signs "Dentistry" dazzle in the eyes, need to remember something. In the USSR, as is known, metal ceramics and other achievements of modern dental medicine did not exist. Two types of teeth could be placed - iron and gold. With iron problems, as the "witnesses of the era" recall, there were practically no. Another thing is gold.

To have crowns or bridges made of yellow metal, people had to queue for months, if not years. Wait for the precious metal to come from a special fund. Well, what about those who could not wait or did not want to? Everything is right - to go to friends about whom it was known that their friends somehow solved the problem with their teeth. Those gave contacts of other acquaintances, others - of third ones. At the end of the chain, a neat woman of about fifty was found, the same Maria Alekseevna.

She was born, as I have already written, in 1913. But she did not know the exact date of her birth. Maria was brought up in an orphanage, then in an orphanage in the city of Smolensk. And I got there after one of the Jewish pogroms. Who were her father and mother is unknown. But the girl was a brunette, and she didn't have a nose at all.

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"potato". And when she grew up, woke up, as my friend laughs, and other genes - the orphan Masha managed to enter a medical school, where she made her way to the dental department. In 1941, when the Germans were already a couple of tens of kilometers away, she barely had time to leave Smolensk for Moscow. Having looked around the place since 1943, according to family tradition, she began to work.

What did she do? She received clients who came from "acquaintances" in the very kitchen where the dental chair and other equipment stood. Formally, it was decommissioned and picked up in a landfill. 4-5 clients came per day. Maria Alekseevna was not engaged in treatment - only dental prosthetics made of gold. She was taking molds of her teeth. Send the patient to the dental clinic for treatment (i.e. tooth extraction). At the same time, she placed an order for the manufacture of a dental prosthesis with the "allied" dental technicians. "Having been treated" in the clinic, the client came directly for prosthetics.

The main thing, as I said above, in this whole scheme was gold. Patients could bring their own metal if they knew where to get it. Where to take? Of course, there was a legal channel - gold jewelry was sold in stores. But "good", that is, massive, rings were in great short supply. So just like that, having come and choosing a golden ring you liked, you could buy it only in Hymeney wedding salons - there was such a chain of stores for newlyweds - by presenting a certificate from the registry office stating that an application for marriage had been submitted.

Naturally, those people who came to Maria Alekseevna to put gold teeth, the metal was mined for them in other ways. Mostly illegal - from buying up jewelry "from under the table" and through blasphemy, to completely illegal operations with gold coins and illegal gold mining.

So, most often, Maria Alekseevna accepted gold items that were brought by clients. In some cases, she used her own gold in her work.

Casting of crowns was carried out by contractors, technicians, also in apartments. Most of them, says my friend, for some reason were Tatars. Parents, as they say, threw her at her grandmother. The most vivid childhood memories are connected with my grandmother and her dental business: colorful Tatar uncles, the same technicians with whom my grandmother often met and discussed something for a long time. And countless wax impressions of teeth, white and pink. What grandmother did, of course, she knew. Just as she knew that it was necessary to keep quiet about this even in front of strangers - not words.

"Tooth business" in the "scoop" was profitable. In the early 1980s, each tooth cost about seventy rubles for Maria Alekseevna's client, plus his own gold, plus the work of a dental technician. In addition, the doctor had surpluses of gold - why not give away the remaining microscopic ingot? Teeth helped "pull out" the whole family. Finding herself in Moscow in 1941 without relatives, acquaintances and connections, Maria Alekseevna, being divorced, was able to buy a cooperative apartment for herself, her daughter and son. Two cars for myself and my son. She never denied herself or her beloved grandchildren anything.

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Well, how did the authorities look at it, you ask? How, how ... Of course, with disapproval, however, the OBKhSS employees also had to treat their teeth. When and under what circumstances this happened is unknown, but for some time now and for many decades, the business of Maria Alekseevna was among those whose existence was unofficially sanctioned by Soviet fighters against entrepreneurship. Thus, the OBKhSS (albeit in the form of a separate small part of it), which was supposed to ruthlessly exterminate the very spirit of entrepreneurship from Soviet citizens.

The terms of the "agreement" were quite simple - the OBKhSS did not touch Maria Alekseevna, and she repaired the teeth of fighters against theft of socialist property for free. Where could it all start? Could and

like this: from a casual conversation between two men, one of which unobtrusively spoke about how well one dentist works. How well she put the crowns, say, Uncle Misha. And the other, on whose forehead it is not written that he is an employee of the Soviet economic intelligence service, wound it around his mustache. And a couple of months later I called the "ward" black marketeer and reminded me about my teeth, and at the same time casually dropped it - I should also put a couple of crowns. God forbid - no corruption! Just one friend recommended to another.

And now that same secret service officer is a regular client of the underground dentist's office. Comes to the owner. Drives teas, speaks for life. Maria Alekseevna jokes sweetly in response, patiently listens to stories about family troubles, and not only listens.

My grandmother was loving, my friend recalls. Once, one of the constant friends of the owner of the underground dentistry, a tank general, jealous of the endless visitors, made a scene. Word for word, and Maria threw a stool at her boyfriend. She fell in the face, knocked out several teeth. Then she got her teeth in, but the relationship was broken off.

But returning to relations with the OBKhSS, Maria Alekseevna's curators changed, but the relationship remained. It became part of the "symbiosis" system of Soviet business and the Soviet state. It would be impossible to survive otherwise. In the apartment where the underground office was located, on some days 4-5 kilograms of gold accumulated. According to the Soviet legislation - guaranteed five years in prison with confiscation of property.

And yet it was life on the edge. In the year 1983, as my friend recalls, there was a story that firmly sunk into her memory. Grandmother got a call from a friend from the OBKhSS. "In fifteen minutes you will have a check. We can't do anything," he hung up. Soon, inspectors with a metal detector burst into the apartment and began a search. The most important thing is that about 2 kilograms of gold were hidden before they arrived. Maria Alekseevna stuffed the metal into the sleeves and pockets of the squirrel coat that you had hung out on the balcony, as if to dry. They checked the balcony, but the fur coat was hung on the rope farthest from the balcony. The metal detector is not

rang.

For a person who has been on the verge for decades (I want to say failure, but no - rather

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catastrophic change for the worse in life circumstances), some semi-automatic survival skills are formed. One of them is to tell only the truth during interrogations. At the very least, it should be true in the subjective sense, what you believe in at the moment. And Maria Alekseevna, according to her granddaughter, mastered this skill - at the right time.

moment could "clear" her memory, leaving only

what you need to talk to investigators. So this time, having thrown out of her head thoughts about a fur coat stuffed with gold, Maria later did not remember about it. Or maybe it was just stress...

Be that as it may, she hung the fur coat back in the pantry. I thought about the gold that they found it and took it with them without filling out a protocol. In other words, they stole it. The family was in a difficult position. Clients demanded either to put teeth or give gold. The next six months about living were almost starving. But winter came, but a fur coat was needed, gold - about two kilograms, it turned out. The pendulum of fortune has swung back side.

"From time to time, my grandmother disappeared somewhere for a long time," says my friend. The first time in her memory this happened in 1951. Then - a few more times. Absences lasted for months, once - more than a year. As it turned out later, this

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there were trips to the camps. Not in the way you thought. Maria Alekseevna, rightly believing that they would not be sent further to the colony, when it was already beginning to "burn" under her feet, she left to work as a dentist in prison hospitals. Naturally, this was done by acquaintance.

Naturally, the underground doctor did not want such a life for his children. Neither son nor daughter were engaged in private practice - both worked as dentists in prestigious Moscow hospitals. Conducted exclusively official reception. Their participation in the business was limited only to the supply of customers to the mother.

What happened to the family business in the early 90s when it stopped being underground? It can be said that practically nothing has changed. Reception of patients still took place in the same kitchen. As before, there was no end to clients - they all also came from friends. True, over time, the composition of the clientele began to change. There were more and more Azerbaijanis, and less and less high-ranking cones. The "elite" came into vogue cermets. But people from the Caucasus still remained true to gold. Why did they go to Maria Alekseevna, and not to the dental offices that had not opened on every corner? The answer is simple - it was cheaper and better. "A year in 2003, my grandmother was still working," says my friend May. In 2006, she died.

She survived her era by 15 years. I'm sorry I didn't get to talk to her in person. If it were necessary to find the "face of business in the Soviet way", then the underground dentist from Bolshaya Gruzinskaya could become one from real contenders.

5.

illegal markets. Naturally, the line between semi-legal and illegal markets is very conditional. Take the same story about the "underground" dentist. On the one hand, the service provided by Maria Alekseevna was completely legal - it was not forbidden by law to treat teeth in the USSR. But on the other hand, she did it without any permission from the state. And besides, from gold - a metal, the possession of which in excess of the established amount is already considered a crime under Soviet law.

Katsenelinboigen in his theory nevertheless seeks to separate completely criminal markets where illegal and illegal goods and services are sold from those where consumers can get a product that is not approved by public morality and legislation. And its illegality arises only in connection with the source of origin. This kind of markets Katsenelinboigen calls "brown markets".

A typical example is the illegal use of official vehicles for personal purposes. In the USSR, where a private car was a rarity, and official taxi services were expensive and were

not of poor quality, this practice has become extremely widespread. Its economic base is simple - many heads of enterprises and organizations had cars personally assigned to them. And with cars - drivers who simultaneously performed the functions of mechanics, when necessary - loaders, and simply - give

bring.

At the same time, their official salary was much lower than the average at industrial enterprises and institutions. In order to prevent a large "turnover" of personnel, to keep responsible and non-drinking (as an option - drinking in moderation) drivers, the authorities went to meet them halfway and allowed them to engage in private cabs in their free time from their main work. It often looked like this - the driver worked for several hours in the morning, and then disappeared until the evening along with the car. He considered this time his own.

The driver's additional income in this case amounted to an amount comparable to the official salary. Gasoline, spare parts and necessary repairs, of course - at the expense of the state. True, all this had to be "gotten" first. But that was the job of a personal chauffeur.

Katsenelinboigen refers to the "brown" markets as the sale from under the counter of a store of various scarce goods, the importation and further resale of imported clothes, shoes, and so on. All this activity is separated from the "black" market, first of all

less severe punishment. It's one thing when the seller, having put aside the thing, then sells it to his friend at the state price. And it is quite another when he sells this thing to a speculator, and he, having added 50%, or even 100% to the price, resells it. Of such kind

operations are punishable by lengthy prison terms conclusions.

The activity of various kinds of speculators who resell either scarce domestically produced goods or illegally imported into the USSR from abroad is the most widespread type of activity.

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which Katsenelinboigen attributed to the "black" market. In the same place - operations with gold and currency. Illegal, private trade in alcohol, including moonshine. Prostitution, drugs. Separate kind of activity sti - trade in goods produced from raw materials stolen from the state. The same workshops, which have already been discussed above.

6.

Despite the fact that this type of activity flourished mainly in the southern republics, there were also illegal productions in Moscow. One of them, one might say classic for the first half of the 1980s, was told to me by a direct participant in the process. This story also sheds some light on where the guilds went after their activities were no longer illegal. Figu names

Welts, I immediately warn you, have been changed - this story was told to me by the ex-wife of a classic guild worker, and her main characters are alive and well, engaged in small business.

So, the main character's name is, say, Sergei Rabinovich (and this is not far from reality). His future wife, Svetlana, a girl from a good family, a first-year student at the Moscow Financial Institute, was 17 when they met in 1983 in a sanatorium near Moscow. Sergei was with a friend - as it turned out later, his name was Andrey Liberzon. They looked like real foreigners. In denim suits, sneakers, decent shirts. He was tall, handsome, five years older. The novel could not stop.

Sergei bought his future wife spicy cocktails for five rubles per serving. He took me to the restaurant "Ka Linka" in the hotel "Cosmos" (buffet, entrance ticket 25 rubles per person). Doorman - 3 rubles. There is also a swimming pool and a sauna. But the greatest shock awaited Svetlana in Dagomys in Sochi, where the couple went on their honeymoon. There was a bowling alley! And stunningly expensively dressed Georgians (or Abkhazians, I don't remember now) littered with money in volumes unthinkable even for Sergey. But the most amazing thing was that the amazing people from Georgia knew Sergey and others. lived with him.

What made it possible to lead such a lifestyle? Speaking very specifically - a three-room apartment in a ten-story building on Dorozhnaya Street in Chertanovo. There were four sewing machines and, the greatest value at that time, two industrial overlockers. Overlock, if anyone does not know, is a sewing machine that allows you to make the so-called external seam, when the fabric is folded inward and overcast with stitches. For Soviet dandies, it was the presence of such a seam that served as a sure sign of a real branded thing, sewn in the west. The entire inner "samostrok" was with a flat seam, made on ordinary sewing machines - Podolsk "Seagulls" or captured "Singers".

Rabinovich sewed on real industrial overlocks, Svetlana does not know how he got them. "On the right, as written off somewhere stolen," she suggests. The shop sewed sports jersey suits and jeans. Where did you get raw materials? Knitwear Sergey bought in

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mostly through acquaintances in the Baltics. There were several knitting factories where people could ship unrecorded products. There were also underground workshops where knitted fabrics were made.

In addition to the Baltic, there was another channel for the supply of materials necessary for underground production - confiscation. In the 1980s, there were several stores in Moscow where, quite officially, things were sold that were confiscated both at customs (i.e., illegally imported) and in the course of investigative measures by authorities within the country. The assortment of goods officially laid out on the counter of these stores, of course, did not strike the imagination. However, next to the official one, as was usual in Soviet trade, there was also an illegal channel. On it you could get really valuable things. For example, Japanese IKKA zippers, an indispensable attribute of clothes "from there".

In addition to suitable materials, "actual" models were needed. And Rabinovich bought them. From those same Georgian acquaintances who brought them through Batumi and Sukhumi. Sergei Rabinovich paid about 200 rubles for one suit. Then he took a tailor's knife and carefully, line by line, ripped open all the seams. A pattern was taken from the "disassembled" thing, and the model launched into production. Seeing for the first time how

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her husband cuts a thing with his own hands, which cost a fabulous one and a half monthly salary of a Soviet engineer, Svetlana was shocked. Then I got used to it.

The sale of things passed through the system of currency shops "Beryozka". One of Rabinovich's many acquaintances took the production of the workshop and, having agreed with the shop assistants, stuffed it. All participants in the chain, of course, were in the share. In a month in this way it was possible to sell 50-100 suits. It could have been more - but the bottleneck in the process was packaging.

The "branded" item differed from the "samoshchiva" in that it was neatly packed on a cardboard with a beautiful printed pattern and packed in a plastic bag. It was difficult with "cartons", but at worst they could be cut from white solid Soviet cardboard. But with cello fan was just a disaster. It was simply not produced in the USSR, and there was nowhere to steal it. So, it was necessary to collect packages from those things that Soviet citizens brought from behind the "hillock". Pay for them. And still, the bottleneck was never "expanded" until 1988, when the foreign trade monopoly was softened, and Western, and then Chinese consumer goods poured into the country.

However, even with his 100 suits a month - evaluate, by the way, the scale of the business, Rabinovich could hardly afford all the blessings of life that existed in the USSR in the first half of the 80s. A cooperative apartment - not the one where the shop was sitting, but in the prestigious Krylatsky, the VAZ-2106 car, the most expensive Moscow bars and restaurants, holidays in Sochi and Ya

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after all the "cuts" to intermediaries, inspectors and other expenses, it was about 1,000 rubles a month. By the standards of the time, it was a lot of money. Three months - and you can buy a car.

Rabinovich did not get up early - at 9-10 o'clock. He hurriedly ate breakfast, drank the morning cup of brewed ground (by no means soluble) coffee. And drove to work. Eight seamstresses worked in shifts in the shop in Chertanovo. Rabinovich checked every seam in their work. He meticulously examined each finished product. I carefully sniffed them - the jeans were supposed to smell like a real good "jeans", and not some cabbage soup. At this time, could subcontractors drive up - people from metal repair with a bag of brass (that is, "golden") rivets. Therefore, Rabinovich could conjure over another torn thing, figure out where and what materials to take

for her.

At six o'clock the shopkeeper was leaving. An equally important part of the work awaited him - in Moscow's hot spots, he met with his counterparties - large Moscow black marketeers, acquaintances who ensured the supply of material and other necessary people. He returned home long after midnight.

In order not to fall under the article for parasitism, he worked at one of the departments of a specific educational institution - a technical college at the Likhachev Plant. He received 120 rubles from the wages, and he gave all this money to people at the cafeteria, so that they would not bother him over trifles.

In theory, Rabinovich should have flourished especially in the era of early cooperatives and then - in the first half of the 90s, when the largest

current state of modern Russia. But no. Of course, he was one of the first to open a cooperative. And at first things even went uphill. Starting from a point in the Riga market, Rabinovich then opened several stores where he sold all the same jeans. However, then he got involved in several scams, unsuccessfully engaged in the construction business.

Bottom line: today he, like thirty years ago, sews. He has a shop. And a dozen people work there. They sew expensive fur clothes on an individual order. Language does not dare to call this business large. Its owner can, as in the "golden" days, afford to go to the best of Moscow restaurants. But this, perhaps, is all. Buy a mansion on Rublevka? Basically, yes, you can. But this already requires a serious strain of all resources. Yacht and private jet? This is already beyond the possibilities.

Why did it happen? Rabinovich, Sveta tells me, like all the people of his circle, was engaged in manual work. He literally made everything with his own hands. It had to be of high quality and "expensive". Plus, he knew how to negotiate with the right people about scarce "components" and shove his goods into Beryozka for a kickback to sellers. The skills that would allow him to build a large, regular business not on 100 expensive things a month, but on several tens of thousands - he did not have either then, in the early 80s, or later - in the 90s and 2000s. e. Or maybe, at some point, Sergei Rabinovich said to himself, "Do I need it?"

But I'm getting ahead of myself too much. Let's go back to the 70s. In times of "mature socialism".

Chapter VI. **Six colors of the Soviet economy****7.**

Analyzing the multilayer structure of the Soviet economy, Katsenelinboigen, in addition to classifying on the basis of legality, divides the existing in the USSR

"markets" into three more categories.

First, these are "rudimentary" markets, the existence of which is determined by the specific conditions of the USSR, as a result of the development of a peasant country with a low standard of living and culture of the population. "Collective farm" and "flea" markets, develop

that moonshine, etc.

The second group is formed markets, the existence of which is characteristic of any developed society. Before First of all, these are large trading "formats", in the Soviet system - large stores of the state trading system, commission shops, buying up.

All distortions

and shortcomings

centralized

planning

Soviet economy

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trade between

enterprises.

And, finally, the third, in my opinion, the most interesting type of "Soviet" markets are those that arise as a side effect of the functioning of a planned economy. All distortions and disadvantages of prices

The Soviet economy sustained its traditional planning through the formation of semi-official, and often completely illegal, direct flows of trade between enterprises.

In this regard, Katsenelinboigen, for example, singles out the activities of the heads of collective farms and state farms.

BUSINESS IN THE USSR

It is the activity
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calls to obtain the equipment, spare
parts and materials they need, which

systematically underestimated
are set to agricultural enterprises.

However, the scale of this
phenomenon, of course, was much
wider than the unofficial barter
exchange between industry and
farmers. Without much exaggeration,

we can say that it was the activities of "pushers", suppliers, illegal brokers
of various kinds that ensured the functioning of the clumsy state economy.
Mark Sherman is one of the typical representatives of this group of Soviet
entrepreneurs.

I found interested parties and bound them with direct business
contracts. Factories with timber processing plants. Combines -
with agricultural enterprises. Both those and others determined
for me the necessary nomenclature, grade, names of materials,
equipment, vehicles. Of course, I had connections, knowledge ...
I drew up legally competent contracts for the interchange.
Concluded contracts for counterparty deliveries between
factories and LDK. Found a rolling stock...

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

The time has come to talk about this part of the Soviet economic reality.

CHAPTER VII

"Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

It would be absolutely wrong to think that the activities of private entrepreneurs in the Soviet economy concentrated only at the lowest, retail level - trade, the production of consumer goods, the provision of services to the population. No, it's not. Market relations, that is, those arising from private, personal and material interests, operated on all levels of the Soviet economy, right up to the very top. The idea of it as a soulless machine operating on the basis of directives issued from the State Planning Commission is categorically wrong. Business opportunities existed almost everywhere.

1.

How so, you ask? And it's very simple. Despite the proclaimed scientific, strictly rational approach to planning, a key part of the Soviet economy, in reality this process was based on the principle of a power game. Throughout the management vertical, from the State Planning Commission to the last turner at the plant, a fierce struggle unfolded between the manager and the managed for the appointment of the plan. Those on the bottom usually tried to

get the smallest possible output plan. And at the same time - to inflate their own costs as much as possible.

What did it give? First of all, freedom of maneuver. Large "planned" resources gave the enterprise the opportunity to more easily exceed the plan both in terms of output and in increasing profits. In turn, the career depends on the fulfillment (overfulfillment) of the plan, and hence the well-being of the management, starting with the director of the plant. Not to mention the fact that the availability of free resources allows

throughout the management
vertical between
manager
and managed
unfolded
fierce fight
for the purpose of the plan.

part of them to use for
organization of illegal production.

How was the fight
for resources, or, in slang
Soviet economists -

"funds"? The feasibility studies of the plan, the piles of papers and the calculations of factory and factory planners are, of course, important. But this, as one might guess, is by no means the only means in the struggle for the plan. The human factor played a much more important role.

relationship.

Aron Katsenelinboigen in the 1950s worked in one of the sectoral research institutes of the Ministry of Building Materials. Among other tasks, the institute had to calculate how much and what kind of resources needed to be kept at enterprises for efficient production. These data were obtained, among other things, by the method of "field" research, when brigades from the institute

traveled to subordinate enterprises and you

Chapter VII. "Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

led to clean water local managers. What are their real powers? What is the actual consumption of material for a particular product? The inspectors climbed the shops, pored over invoices and registration cards.

Checked, of course, tried to adjust with auditors, what is called human relations. They were invited to drinking parties in restaurants, all kinds of celebrations, which also ended in drinking.

Naturally, the matter was not limited to just parties. For the "correction" of plans, appointment At favorable purchase prices, large sums of money were transferred and valuable gifts were presented. Kakha Bendukidze, today a minister in the government of Georgia, says: "Georgian goods - food, light industry products, were supplied to other republics of the USSR at prices higher than world prices, and a flow of cheap raw materials, equipment, machinery was flowing back." At first, such a bias was deliberately allowed by the Soviet planners. Thus, the industrialization of the Georgian SSR was financed.

However, already in the 1960s, the state policy of accelerated development of the national outskirts became only a screen for outright corruption. "One of the Ministers of Finance of Georgia was convicted of bribery. He was charged with stealing 18 million rubles from the budget. An absolutely fantastic amount for the late 1970s! [During the investigation] he says ril - and I'm all this money from

for the "correction"
plans, appointment
profitable purchasing
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valuable gifts.

I took him to Moscow so that they would give us good purchasing prices, "Bendukidze describes the situation.

The leadership of the USSR, of course, knew about the widespread practice of bribing employees of higher organizations. The fight against this phenomenon was carried out. However, in practice, there was no separate punishment for issuing a "preferential" plan. Beneficial or not - it still had to be figured out. Pretty to delve into the real situation at the enterprise, find out which of its "sores" is the most painful for the director. And here everything was far from ambiguous. The Soviet economy was not in vain called the kingdom of the absurd.

2.

Here is a typical example - Leonid Kantorovich, the future Nobel laureate (received the prize "for contribution to the theory of the optimal distribution of resources") at the end of the 1940s tried to put some of his ideas into practice. At his suggestion, the Yegorov Leningrad Carriage Works introduced a system of optimal planning for cutting steel sheets. And at first glance, the effect was positive. The plant reduced waste from 26% to 7%.

However, after some time, Kantorovich was invited by the secretary of the Leningrad Regional Party Committee and accused him of almost sabotage. Before the arrest of the future world-famous economist, only one step separated him. What's the matter?

Chapter VII. "Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

It turned out that the Egorov plant had been a supplier of scrap to the Cherepovets metal plant (modern Severstal) for many years. After the introduction of a new system for cutting metal, the plant did not fulfill the plan for the delivery of scrap metal. This, in turn, led to the disruption of the plan by the Cherepovets plant. The question reached the Politburo. And the organizational conclusions could be serious.

Waste as a result turned out to be not waste at all, but a valuable, almost strategic raw material. Why shouldn't the Cherepovets plant replace shavings and scrap metal with more ore deliveries? It's a rhetorical question - that's how the Soviet economy worked. Fortunately for Kantorovich, the story ended only with the fact that from a dangerous innovation under a plausible

the offer was rejected.

What is the moral? Yes, in the fact that in the "scoop" it could suddenly turn out to be important that, under normal conditions, seems like complete nonsense. And vice versa.

At the same time, it was impossible to simply pay money to get what you were looking for. It was necessary to agree that "funds" would be allocated first, and then real resources would be allocated for these funds. And if resources cannot be obtained from above (or it is not possible to extract them in the required volumes - applications for different types of positions were "chopped off" in different proportions), then you can get them from a neighbor on the floor, the same director. What does the process look like?

As the experienced planner Katsenelinboigen writes, for example, this is how: the head of the supply department of this plant calls his friend the head of the supply department of another plant and asks him: "Ivan Petrovich, do you have such and such a profile of metal that way 10 tons?". To which Ivan Petrovich replies: "Dear

Yevsey Abramovich, of course, there is someone for you. But what will you give me in return? Do you have, say, bearings of this diameter? The answer follows: "I don't have them, but I will try to find out from Viktor Iosifovich and call you back." As a result, a chain of exchange arises, sometimes including dozens of links.

But why am I retelling all the sources? In order for you to have a practical live idea of how the Soviet economy worked in reality, in order to feel its real "taste" and "smell", it is better to listen to a direct participant in the process. Fortunately, there is such an opportunity. In the early 1980s, the then young sociologist Sergei Belanovsky conducted a series of in-depth interviews with representatives of various social groups in Soviet society.

Among other respondents, Belanovsky interviewed Vyacheslav Igrunov, an employee of the supply department of a large machine-building plant. This conversation, if you have a desire to understand how the gears turned in production in the conditions of Soviet reality, is very informative.

3.

A truly phantasmagoric picture is being built of how the centralized supply mechanism works. Or rather, how it doesn't work.

So where does it all start? If you act according to the rules, then with the calculation of the needs of the enterprise. Ideally, this work should be completed by the end of January. Then, from January to May, correctly completed applications were drawn up and sent to supplying organizations. Depending on the type of request

Chapter VII. "Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

resources, applications went either to the territorial administration, or to Moscow, to the ministry.

The Ministry distributes the most scarce resources - alcohol, liquid oxygen, wrapping paper. It itself receives them from the Gossnab, then delivers them to the enterprise through the territorial Administration, which in this case acts only as an intermediate base. Other positions are distributed through the regional MTS Department. Its source of supply is the same as that of the Ministry, Gossnab. But the Office receives and distributes resources among the enterprises of the

thoroughly.

It is impossible to understand why this type of "funds" is distributed through the ministry, and this one - through the territorial administration. However, one must proceed from the fact that these are two autonomous supply channels that cannot be combined.

...For example, granular polystyrene is a ministerial position, and sheet polystyrene is a position of territorial administration. Right now we just needed sheet polystyrene instead of granular, but replace

one to the other I can't, because they come from different

funds. All I can do when I come to Moscow is give my funds to granulated polystyrene, since I don't need them. I cannot get a leaf in the territorial administration, because this is an extremely scarce position. However, if I do manage to get sheet polystyrene locally, this will not affect my funds for granular polystyrene in any way. At present, we are simply changing granular to sheet at other plants....

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

After the applications are submitted, the supplier receives the so-called stock notices, drawn up according to a standard model - "Your enterprise has been allocated such and such an amount of material for such and such a year." As a rule, requests are not fulfilled in full.

Having received confirmation for the issuance of "funds", on the enterprise calculates their number for individual items. Naturally, since there are fewer "funds" allocated than applications have been submitted, locals are dissatisfied. "Protocols of disagreements" are being prepared and sent to the top. In response, a proposal comes to replace the required material with another, similar in characteristics. The company is preparing a response. In such correspondence, up to six months pass. The plan for the release of products by that time manages to be corrected. Some things are no longer needed. And other materials that were not in the original applications, on the contrary, are needed.

What to do if requests are not fulfilled? What remains is exchange with other enterprises.

For example, out of 4.5 thousand meters of tarpaulin, 300 meters are allocated to me. Naturally, before the beginning of the planning period, I must find either the possibility of a replacement, or the possibility of obtaining additional funds. With additional funds, I will eventually run up another 200-300 meters. The rest must be mined by oneself: replaced with synthetic materials, etc. Replacement should be decided together with the designers, the territorial administration and, perhaps, with enterprises that

eye we supply products.

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

Chapter VII. "Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

Once the requisitions have been made and confirmed, the procurer must ensure that the required requisition resources are delivered (this is known as "reclamation of funds"). It is necessary to wander around the warehouses, control the receipt of resources, and finally, issue orders and send the necessary materials to production.

This is the official, formal side of things. In real life, the process is built with numerous deviations from the rules. To begin with, the supplier receives specific figures for the production plan for the current year with a delay of three to four months. In order not to be late with the submission of applications, you have to draw them up by eye. Proceeding not from actual production needs, but from last year's experience or some other considerations.

Naturally, I can't really shortchange the need. I calculate it "on the top", that is, I know where my pain points are, I calculate them, and I write everything else "at random". I roughly know the needs of the enterprise, from

the consumption of materials in previous years is known, that's how I

I make a balance. Balances are usually fictitious. I enclose the calculation of the need with the applications, and for many materials confirmation in the form of approved norms of need is not needed, but if it is required, then we simply write down what we need

number, this document is signed by the deputy director, director, chief technologist, etc., the seal is put and the letter is sent.

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

The needs of the enterprise calculated in this way are practically not connected with the norms of resource consumption per unit of output. In-

First, data on planned production volumes are chronically late. And it is physically impossible to order the resources that are really necessary based on the actual production volumes. And secondly, when filling out an application, the supplier must always keep in mind that some of the materials will inevitably be stolen, and some must be reserved for the "exchange" fund with other enterprises.

There are a number of scarce materials that I spend in excess of any standards. This includes, in particular, building materials, such as roofing material. This roofing material is taken out of the plant, taken out, disappears in an incomprehensible way. Instead of this roofing material, it is necessary to use bituminized paper when carrying out some work. As a result, I do not have enough rubero ide or paper, I have to overestimate the need for both

other, i.e. I draw up my applications in this case, taking into account theft. I am compelled to do this because I am obliged to resolve the issues of material support for production. Product packaging is associated with these materials. They won't pack it, they won't ship it - I'll be to blame. I can't reduce theft either, so that, with all my desire, I cannot ignore this item of expenditure of material (if I want to work here).

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

In other words, it is clear that there is in fact no rational approach to planning and organizing production. There is some kind of incomprehensible fuss and juggling of data, issuing fake papers and "breaking through" all this at the top - in the head offices and ministries. Here is another illustration of how "planning" actually worked:

Chapter VII. "Pushers", "funds" and "golden key"

...Last year there was the following problem. My predecessor ordered the same amount of rubber and paintwork from the factory as in the previous year. For vendors, this is common practice. But due to the fact that two charge supply systems were planned for that year, one for export to Nigeria and the other to India, the demand for rubber increased 16 times. My predecessor did not notice this, and instead of 32 tons she ordered 2 tons. The demand for paintwork has also increased by 2-3 times. In addition, the missing 30 tons of rubber had to be in tropical style.

Naturally, when such a shortage emerged at the beginning of the planning year, it was extremely difficult to solve this problem. To do this, it was necessary to submit calculations. Our technical department, which makes such calculations, cannot cope with this. They make them very close

really, and besides, not even know, say, specific gravity materials that are ordered. They just order the maximum amount.

territorial administration, naturally, with such fake

disagreed with our calculations and demanded that they be given

initial data for calculations (norms, etc.).

To imagine such norms was completely

It is clear that no rational approach to planning and organizations production on the case no. Is there some obscure fuss and juggling data, design fake papers and "piercing" all this at the top - in the heads and ministries.

impossible because my predecessor didn't know what it was for the norms. She tried to foist on them completely different norms, specified, and the territorial administration demanded detailed ones. This woman had no idea they existed.

When I found these detailed norms and passed them on to her (then I was already working at the factory, but in a different position), she did not know how to use them and could not learn how to do it. I myself explained how you need to do the calculation, from what specific weights must be based on different categories of materials, etc., that is, science in general is not tricky. I compiled the necessary tables and simply submitted them along with the application to the territorial administration. Previously, this management categorically refused to consider our question on the grounds that we do not have documentation and substantiation.

So, I submitted the tables, some of them were checked, and some were not even checked. Moreover, I significantly overestimated the need in some materials, but these calculations took me and agreed with me. I was given a letter from the territorial administration to the Ukrainian Glavsnab. But before they signed an application for the required quantities of materials, they had to make sure that there were at least some calculations, that is, that at least the order of the requirements met the real need.

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

Amazing! The company's production plan is changing, and two new large orders appear. Naturally, these orders came out of the blue, the foreign trade organization that signed contracts with India and Nigeria did not keep the plant informed about their negotiations. All supplies, as usual, are planned by eye and based on last year's indicators. We urgently need to build supplies to meet new needs. What do the suppliers of the enterprise do? Together with the technologists, they sit down and estimate, almost "from the bulldozer", the maximum possible amount of resources and send an application statement.

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Naturally, it is wrapped. And how else, if even specific indicators are not indicated there? What is the consumption of at least that scarce paint that is resistant to tropical conditions? And what parts and assemblies are planned to be processed with it? But in general, no particularly deep calculations were required. All that was needed was some formal paperwork. Having strained, the factory composed it. But precisely what is formal, with fake calculations and with inflated, relative to real needs, volumes.

4.

Nevertheless, the application was approved, the paint was sent to the factory. Let me remind you that this is happening in the early 80s, when the lean manufacturing system (lean manufacturing) was already being introduced at Toyota factories. What kind of competitiveness is there. Any person who has been to an ordinary Soviet, for example, machine-building enterprise, who has seen mountains of rusty rubbish, metal spoiling in the mining, it is obvious that the centralized economy worked in the most inefficient way.

It's amazing that it worked at all. After all, the plant has a wide list of suppliers of components. And all these supplies are come according to plans, put on the basis most

In addition to official plans and official distribution channels materials, there are informal. Those same trade chains, existing in parallel gosplanovskim.

falsified, fabricated data. And yet the system works. Paradox? This is if you do not know that in addition to official plans and official channels for distributing materials, there are also unofficial ones. Those same chains of commodity exchange that exist in parallel with those of the State Planning Commission. Here's how they work.

Question: Please tell us how you exchange materials with other factories?

Answer: This is very easy to do. I have a deficit. I call other companies and ask if there is

whether they have something or other.

Question: So you know all the enterprises in the city?

Answer: I must know them and must know who has what, who works with what. I call and ask if they can help me. When they say that they can, they immediately ask me a counter question, can I help them with something too. Usually employees of the supply departments at different plants lead approximately one

group of materials, i.e. there are metalworkers, chemists, etc.,

and they are interested in knowing each other.

Question: Are these exchanges somehow registered?

Answer: Yes, they are registered. A number of materials cannot be exchanged without the permission of the territorial administration. This includes metal, paint, chemicals, plastics, etc. In order to make such an exchange, after an agreement with an enterprise, we write an official letter to this enterprise, where a visa is put on our letter that they can release the material we need. With this visa we are going to the territorial office

we get his permission, and after that an exchange is made, which is registered in a special book, which indicates what and on the basis of what was issued, the number of the exchange

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attire, etc. All other materials are exchanged directly. Small quantities are exchanged without registration, as there is too much fuss. But when exchanging large quantities of material, checks can detect regrading, and this is useless. In addition, documents are needed to control at least the approximate equivalence of the exchange. I will not be allowed to exchange 10 kg of small screws for 10 kg of large ones, so

as small ones are much more expensive.

There are times when we give something without asking for anything. in return, just in order to help each other.

Question: How many factories in the city do you know?

Answer: I don't know much yet, about two dozen. Basically, you need to know a lot more. But I noticed that our suppliers still know a small number of enterprises. They are accustomed to working with several factories, and this suits them. They do not go beyond the boundaries of the usual. There are a number of very powerful enterprises in the city with which we have no relations at all. These enterprises usually do not need anything, they do not need to barter something from us, so they do not give us anything; perhaps our numbers are too small for them. However, these obstacles can be overcome. I have already worked with them a little, and I think that I will gradually find contact with them. Here we are not talking about the fact that they will exchange something with us, but having personal contact, you can ask for something, and they will not refuse. I'm trying to work this way, but our suppliers don't work that way.

The range of materials that are available (or may be available) in the warehouses of other enterprises is often not mastered by the suppliers, that is, they do not know what anyone has. However, each supplier tries to hide what he has (but to find out what the other has), otherwise subcontractors will put pressure on him. Territorial administration behaves in the same way.

and the ministry. You won't know what they have in stock. But still you should know all this. And we have a woman in the department who is the most qualified in this respect: she always knows where to find something. She deals with hardware, that is, screws, screws, etc. If she needs something, she quickly finds it. True, she will not lift a finger more than that, but this is a special question. All other workers of the region are not inert, unenterprising. And enterprise, if it exists, is expressed rather in arrogance, in attempts to deceive, etc. There is no real hard work.

Question: What is the share of exchange transactions in the total volume of supply?

Answer: I have already said that for many reasons we cannot plan our need for materials normally. In addition, we constantly receive not what we ordered. Let's say we need the thirtieth channel, and the fourteenth channel comes to us.

Question: Why is this happening?

Answer: Suppose a certain enterprise is charged with supplying us with a certain amount of metal, for example, beams. We need a beam "90", but for some reason that plant does not roll it. Then a pusher comes from us and demands that we deliver. So they bicker: "But we demand!" "But we can't!" - and so on. As a result, it turns out that they can give something else. The question arises: to take or not to take? We call the factory. We make a decision: we take, and then we exchange. Often, in this way it is possible to obtain positions that are in short supply in the city. However, there are times when we do not receive anything at all, although the application is planned. Last year we lived without coke for several months, we borrowed this coke from various plants under a letter of guarantee with an obligation to return it in a week. Then this week dragged on until the end of the year, and everything was written off there. By the way, this is a typical situation. Warranty

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a letter is an additional loophole for such operations. For example, it is forbidden to transfer alcohol to other exchange enterprises or in any other way, but according to a letter of guarantee, it is possible, and they use it. The same thing happens with metal and other materials, that is, formally, materials are borrowed, counting on a return, as was the case with coke. If we do not return something, the company has the right to apply to arbitration. Unfortunately, I do not know of a single case where an enterprise applied to arbitration, but in principle a conflict

you between enterprises arise.

Question: How often do you not receive what you are "loaded" with?

Answer: Quite often. For example, we were loaded with four channel cars, but only three arrived. It happens often. It happens that the plant sends, but at the end of December, when we no longer have time to receive it. Our funds disappear, and the material remains, as it were, in the ownership of the territorial administration, and it disposes of it at its own discretion. Usually the base does not give us this material, because metal is such a scarcity that the base itself can exchange anything for it. But there are times when the base is not interested in this material or is interested in carrying out its plan, then it

gives it to us.

Now about the share of exchanges. For my group of materials (paper, textiles, etc.), there are relatively few exchanges, hardly more than a quarter of their total volume. A somewhat larger share of exchange and purchases is occupied by oxygen. As for the metal, I think that a good half of it comes to our plant through exchange. As for the paintwork, I think it is exchanged from one third to a half. Rubber is a non-deficient material, exchanges are rare here. Hardware is exchanged in the same way as metal, i.e. more than half, maybe even more than metal.

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

So what happens? With loose and inefficient centralized supply, enterprises have to survive at the expense of "direct" connections. In the case described by Belanovsky, it is the direct supplies of the manufacturer that cover half of the plant's needs for metal, and a third for paint. Volumes are comparable in other areas as well. Although, of course, "straight" is not quite the right word. Rather, they are "curves" - by barter, without a competitive selection of suppliers, in the most direct sense, by acquaintance.

When loose and inefficient centralized supply enterprises and have to survive on "direct" links.

Plus, let's add bribes! Chalk

Which offerings are considered my norm. They are hinted at, they themselves are asked. And, of course, they are willing to take it. What do they give? Yes, in different ways. But, as the supplier Igrunov says, the "golden key" is alcohol. It opens absolutely all doors. Liquid currency can be

exchanged for acid, or for a plank machine. In a year, Igrunov distributed about 200 liters of valuable liquid.

And finally, what is called, as a bonus, a first-person story about theft. "Get the last nail from work, you are the master here, not a guest" - this is just from that time. It is very important for understanding the spirit of the era. Moods that were in the air:

... It's even scary to talk about it in front of a tape recorder. I would say that theft is just the norm. Everyone is engaged in this - from the worker to the director, including all engineers. For us, the most common form of theft is

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removal of materials from the plant, of course, to personal needs. The case when the same director takes material and takes it out of the plant for the district committee of the party, I do not attribute it to theft, this is the provision of normal working conditions for the plant. The same is done for the city committee, regional committee, OBKhSS, police, traffic police, and various other organizations.

So, theft is what is taken out for personal needs. The director never has difficulty with any material. If he has a dacha repair, he loads the car with cement, sand, bricks, timber, everything he needs, and he's lucky. They even know the driver: since such and such material, it means that the director should go to the dacha. If they said what to take to a pioneer camp, then director.

There is one very unpleasant aspect for me here. All these business takes precedence over factory needs, supply needs. If one of the bosses decides that he needs materials, all factory needs are pushed aside. Eg, the director doesn't care whether they bring him the material in the morning or in the afternoon. But I do care, because in many cases I can only get material before lunch. Nevertheless, the car is loaded in the morning, and no one considers my demands. Several times I asked to pick up the materials on the way back - they also refused. All this not only causes inconvenience, but also offends. If I were younger, I would certainly have been drawn into a terrible conflict, and I would have had to leave.

Now about what the workers themselves do in terms of theft. For example, timber, this is the most typical example. Wood is an extremely scarce material. Funds for timber are extremely limited, the situation here is very tense. The proportion of theft in the total consumption of timber is very large. I think that it reaches at least a quarter of the flow of the entire forest. Moreover, this is a very high quality wood.

How is wood stolen? - The plant allows workers to buy waste timber for firewood or other needs. The worker writes out one cubic meter of firewood; it is inexpensive, five or seven rubles. Then he loads as much timber as he goes into the tractor trailer and hauls it out. This trailer includes two or three cubic meters of wood, rather, perhaps, all three. It is also important to note what kind of forest it is. The fact is that when sawing, waste is really generated. But 2–3 cubes during intensive work can be accumulated in no less than a week. Considering that for

month the forest takes out not one or two people, but many, somewhere this wood must be taken. And no one is interested in waiting until this forest accumulates, because if he waits, this forest will be taken away by others. Therefore, the situation goes like this: a certain bribe is brought to the sawmiller (there is a certain fee, 15 rubles), and this sawmiller turns into waste the excellent timber that he has at hand. If he has trimmed needles on hand, which is the #1 deficit among the #1 deficits, he takes and saws it. This wood is sawn into chocks and then legally exported from the plant. My ex-boss, the only thing he could do in this area was to approve the order that no more than two cubic meters of timber be released to one person, because in reality even more is exported anyway.

Supplier Vyacheslav Igrunov, in an interview with Sergei Belanovsky

5.

So, returning to Aron Kantselinboigen's theory about the color markets of the Soviet economy. Summing up his lengthy description of the planning system in force in the USSR, he writes that it, of course, did not solve the problems of supplying industrial

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laziness. Deficiencies and at the same time an excess of certain types of resources in certain types of enterprises - this was a systemic problem. It was solved, on the one hand, by "working" with higher organizations ("bribery", building "human relations"—whatever you want to call it), and, on the other hand, through the mechanisms of resource exchange parallel to the State Planning Committee.

Direct economic exchanges were not welcome, but with their existence had to reconcile. To have it all worked, needed the corresponding people are "purchasers", "pushers".

It is impossible to call this second type of activity completely illegal. Direct economic exchanges were not welcomed, but their existence had to be put up with. In order for all this to work, appropriate people were needed - "suppliers", "pushers". Their activity was a priori considered doubtful. The OBHSS and other punitive agencies saw them as their number one target.

Who were they? In the public consciousness of that time - adventurers, swindlers, grabbers, thieves. And that was not far from the truth. To do business in these troubled waters, one had to have the appropriate temperament. But without them, the enterprise simply could stop. A good supplier was worth its weight in gold for the director. In addition to full-time, their own specialists, "free artists" could not help but appear. People who thoroughly know how the system works and offer their services to extract the necessary resources. Mark Sherman was one of them.

CHAPTER VIII

Soviet trader

In October 1980, in the office of Comrade Mitrofanov, Deputy General Director of the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works (the famous Magnitogorsk Plant), a short, stout, heavily built elderly man frequented the office. He was dressed in a rumpled gray jacket with a carelessly knotted tie. But he kept himself. Every time Mitrofanov,

postponing all business, he received, apparently, an important visitor. Everyone who sat for hours in the waiting room, waiting for an audience, had only to see off the "lucky one" with their eyes.

But I would try not to accept Mitrofanov. The combine was suffocating from the lack of wagons. Up to 20,000 railway platforms stood idle per day on the access roads of Magnitogorsk. Before loading metal on them, the wagons had to be repaired. To fix it, a forest was needed. But there was no forest. Les promised to get the same man in a crumpled suit. It was Mark Sherman.

1.

He got a board - about 3000 cubic meters. This? Certainly? did not cover all the needs of the plant, but allowed to survive the next aggravation of the

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racing crisis. If Sherman had not appeared on time, the matter could have ended sadly for the plant's authorities - on October 26, Comrade Kirilenko, curator from the Central Committee of the CPSU, came to the enterprise. Just about the disruption of the shipment plan. If the work could not be established by his arrival, some would have to say goodbye to their position.

But how did it happen? The legendary Magnitogorsk, one of the flagships of the Soviet industry, an enterprise with tens of thousands of employees and a powerful planned business, turned out to be powerless. And by that time, the disabled and unemployed Mark Sherman could?

All the circumstances of the case now, probably, can no longer be restored. But to simplify, the scheme was like this. Sherman agreed with Mitrofanov to supply the so-called "rolled wire", soft thick wire, from Magnitogorsk. For those times, it was a very valuable thing; it was tied to "packages" of boards transported by rail. It was used at construction sites, at logging, when rafting down rivers, and at industrial production. And it was in severe shortage.

Sherman, as he himself writes about it, received a credit of trust at the metallurgical plant. In practice, this meant that, at Sherman's request, the plant shipped wire rod to any addressee at any time. However, the question remains, where did this extra wire come from at the plant itself? The answer is obvious - due to over-limit production. How this was possible can be found in the previous chapter.

But back to Sherman. Having such a resource in his pocket, he went to the woodworking combines

you are LDK. There he offered to supply scarce wire in exchange for timber. The management of the plant grabbed the opportunity to get valuable material. Sherman signed an exchange agreement with him and proceeded to the next stage of the operation - the search for railways wagons.

The catch was that each enterprise had its own limit on wagons. It was formed based on the production plan. And even within these limits, the cars had to be "knocked out" from the railway. Naturally, the railroad workers had spare, over-limit cars - just in case someone overfulfilled the plan. Some large enterprises also had them, the suppliers of which contrived to communicate correctly with the Ministry of Railways. But they had to be found first, and then taken.

Sherman entered this game. He had a rod. He had a forest, which he was promised in exchange for a ka tanka. And he had connections - in the Krasnoyarsk, West Siberian and South Ural railway departments. There he mined wagons. As it was called in the slang of Soviet suppliers - "for counter supply." The wire rod was sent to the timber processing plant, in the opposite direction - the board needed for Magnitogorsk.

Why couldn't the factory suppliers do this? Probably could. But they sat at their desks in a warm room, received 140 rubles a month. It was important for them to fulfill the plan, that is, to write a piece of paper that the plan was fulfilled. To travel thousands of kilometers, to rub something with unfamiliar and unpleasant people?

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For what? To do this, you need talent, passion, inability to live differently. You have to be an entrepreneur. Sherman was.

2.

He received his first term in 1950. Yalta prosecutor Zhukova and judge Migrahi gave the 17-year-old boy 10 years. Article - theft of state property as part of an organized group (gang). In 1953, the conviction was expunged and extinguished. The second term - seven years in prison, Sherman received in 1971. The accusation is still the same - embezzlement of state property on a large scale. Released from prison in 1974, on parole.

A characteristic detail is that almost immediately he got a job as deputy general director for supply of the Kurganoblobuvsbyt association. After all, I said somewhere above that grasping suppliers, albeit with a "term", from the USSR were worth their weight in gold.

Sherman was soon diagnosed with cancer. Gave the first group of disability. Every cloud has a silver lining - it was possible not to work officially and not fall under the article on parasitism. In the three years that remained for Sherman until the next landing, he managed to come back for real.

Sherman supplied not only wire rod to Siberian timber processing enterprises. From factories in the Urals and the Volga region, he dragged the cable. From the Chelyabinsk Pipe Rolling Plant - pipes. From the Kurgan plant "Synthesis" - polyethylene. Metal cable from Belorechensk. Three wagons of lamps from located in

Saransk plant. Rolled steel, wires, trucks, tractors... Sherman became a prominent figure throughout Siberia and the northern part of Kazakhstan. The key element in the system built by Sherman was several dozen state farms in the southern regions of Siberia and the adjacent regions of Kazakhstan.

Knowing about the possibility of supplying substandard lumber to the Lesosibirsk and New Yenisei timber processing plants of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Sherman and [Nikolai] Shirin traveled around the state farms of the Kurgan, Kustanai, Turgai regions and, taking advantage of the fact that these farms were in dire need of building materials, offered their services for conclusion of contracts for the supply of timber to state farms from the above-mentioned timber and wood processing plants with payment for it by bank transfer

*Judgment of the Kustanai Regional Court
dated June 23, 1983 in the case of Mark Sherman*

Well, that's the way it was. Only the expression "sharp needed" does not quite accurately describe the situation with lumber rates for agricultural enterprises located in the steppe zone. They simply did not have a forest, there was nowhere to prepare it. And the board was needed catastrophically.

And then there was Sherman. In May 1979, white Zhiguli drove up to the office building of the Utyatsky state farm (Ketovsky district, Kurgan region). Sherman and his driver Nikolai Shirin got out of the car. We went up to the porch of the building and, creaking with cracked floorboards, went to the director's office. Mikhail Yuditsky, an old acquaintance and childhood friend of Sherma-

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on, the visit of an old friend was delighted. He vacated the table, took out a bottle, shouted into the corridor to bring something to eat.

Recalling mutual acquaintances, Sherman quickly got down to business, briefly told Yuditsky about his capabilities in the extraction of sawn timber. Yudits cue nearly choked as he ate another pile. What Sherman was suggesting was too good to be true. An unfinished cowshed, a canteen, several residential buildings - a forest was needed, what is called "blood from the nose." And then a man comes and calmly

says everything is available.

How? The scheme is as follows - the state farm supplies the necessary LDK goods to the woods, and in exchange receives timber. At the same time, goods can be supplied not only from what the state farm actually has at the moment. You can use what the company should receive from the "funds". But haven't received it yet. Sherman himself will take care of "knocking out" these "funds", and the necessary goods (tractors, metal, equipment) will go directly to the LDK, bypassing the state farm.

Sherman asked only to pay for the organization of the scheme. And he asked relatively inexpensively - something around 1000 rubles. He received this money on the same day at the cash desk of the state farm. The basis is the fake invoices issued to him for harvesting and subsequent sawing of the forest. It seems to be like Sherman should give the received money to a brigade of lumberjacks. But it is clear to all participants in the operation that there will be no lumberjacks. And Sherman will take the money for his troubles.

Arriving at the timber processing plant, Sherman concludes from on behalf of the state farm, an agreement for the counter delivery of goods

ku - the same wire rod, electric lamps, automotive equipment or heavy tractors. Rates? For example, a ZIL-130 truck cost 150–200 cubic meters of board. Or 4 covered railway cars filled with saw materials. State farms, into which the Soviet state in the early 1980s poured and poured funds, literally bathed in abundance in many commodity items. Now, thanks to Sherman, they could exchange some of these goods for what they really needed.

3.

The first few operations Sherman played with familiar directors. Then, when rumors about a person who could get a scarce board spread widely enough, people from the outside began to approach the “trader”. Sherman met with them at his apartment. Here, in the smallest of the three rooms, he equipped an office. He took money right away. Usually people brought them already with them - in bank packs. Some paid a thousand rubles, some five, some six. For the most part, payments were made out as orders for logging.

In total, Sherman earned about 90,000 rubles during the three years of active operations. Or an average of 2500 rubles a month. But he did earn them. After all, after the money was received, a hell of a job had to be done for them. To begin with, it was required to be on the road all the time. In a month, Sherman drove thousands of twenty kilometers along the roads of Siberia and Kazakhstan. He had to fork out for a trans-

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port - second-hand "Zhiguli" of the fourth model and a brand new "Niva".

Having signed an agreement for the supply of timber at the state farm, Sherman got into his Niva and drove from Kurgan to the Krasnoyarsk Territory, to Lesosibirsk, to the LDK. Having endorsed the papers there, I went to the regional capital - this is another 400 kilometers. There he drew up orders for the shipment of timber in the head trust. From there - back to Lesosibirsk.

Having received the outfits, the LDK could start loading. But first he had to fit the wagons. This means that you need to go to the junction station, take the cars there, the limit for which has already been "knocked out". From the station back to the combine, make sure that the pastures are loaded with exactly what is needed. And not rot and scraps of the board. Check that the wagon is fully loaded. All 50 cubes and all the desired grade: 25 cubes of "thirty" (board 30 mm thick), 20 cubes - "magpie" and 5 cubes of timber. Exactly what the state farm ordered.

The loaded wagons went back to the station, to the "hill". A composition was formed there, to be sent to consumers. When the cars were leaving, Sherman rushed to the telegraph office to send a telegram to the customer to wait. After all, from the Kazakh state farms, for example, to the destination station - another 700 kilometers. Until the KamAZ trucks are driven up, the wagons with the forest will stand. Every day of downtime kills the chances of getting a railcar limit the next time.

Station, post office, telegraph, combine... It's all nearby in the city. Reach on foot. In the steppes and taiga, where Sherman wandered, the road takes endless hours, or even days. Seasonal roads are lay roads, practically impassable in summer. Clouds of midges. Screes in the Sayan Mountains.

In winter it's minus forty, and you have to go out three or four times during the night to warm up the engine, otherwise it won't start in the morning. And at five in the morning to the plant. Then - to the cargo area. Then to the station. From day to day. From week to week. Driving life. Calluses from Sherman's "steering wheel" came off only in the colony, five years after judgment.

"... In the taiga, I "flew" once. In the Sayans, in the Kemerovo region. On the "Niva". Long flew. He directed the car himself and jumped. There was no exit...

Ahead was "KamAZ". Decently drowned, more than a hundred kilometers. Behind him, snow curls like a loach. And I let him walk around. I was somewhere around 140 km per hour. 5.5 thousand revolutions on the tachometer. There was a left turn. Fairly smooth. Degrees 65-70.

I drive hard. Distances need to be covered, but if you keep 80-90 km per hour, then how much more will you "cut" to Khabarovsk, say? So you need to keep the speed as high as possible.

I bypass this "truck driver". They looked at each other. I winked at him again. And as he looked forward On the contrary, a rod in the forehead. "KamAZ"... I don't know how many. Column. tail by tail stoma To brake? God save you! Twist, you will get into such a "porridge". Trouble.

Well, truckers know this. In the parking lots, we always rest together.

"Let's sit", who has what. I'm always marinated

I had some meat in thermoses, on wine, on vinegar, for shish kebabs.

Someone always has vodka. In short, we know each other.

And this guy is a stranger. I see his eyes widen with fear. I switch to the third, to the second. On the speedometer 80! 50! I turn to the right and... I see that his brake light is red! That's it... I'm going under his body.

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Instantly make a decision: steering wheel to the left! And I jump down. And there - the tops of the fir trees are only visible. Meters 50-60. And maybe more. Then I count only how many times I turned over. 13! Lucky number... Got on wheels from below. I looked up - all the drivers were standing on the side of the road. They are looking at me, that is.

Then the arcs were saved. Under the roof I bring additional inch pipes. We have a bus depot here, there, according to the pull and do..."

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

4.

Although, of course, the difficulties of Sherman's business were not limited to long hauls on bad roads. Imagine - a taiga station. The convicts and yesterday's convicts are engaged in loading the wagons. What do they want from life? For the most part - money and vodka. They loaded the planned wagons. All! How can you force them to do what they are not supposed to do? This is for

the cottage is more difficult than keeping the car on a slippery winter road.

Sherman had methods. He knew who was really in charge at the station. This is not the boss. Not his sales assistant. And not the administration of the local correctional labor institution. This is the accountant Maria Konova, or as Sherman calls her in his memoirs, "Masha, the cutter of cubic capacity in the cars."

So, in the hands of this Masha, an aunt of forty-five years old, was the most powerful instrument of influencing the local public - accounting for the timber shipped by teams of loaders. Masha could calculate "correctly", or she could

and recalculate in the "wrong" side for the brigade. She spoke with the contingent in the same language. If you want even - he will raise the dead. It is necessary to communicate with her on all issues.

How to communicate? You can't offer money - in such a place and with such experience, all the money has already been collected. We need to build relationships. Sherman succeeded. Others, who, tempted by "easy" money from the same Kazakh camp, came to work from state farms according to the same scheme, achieved nothing but scuffles.

The network built by Sherman worked flawlessly until his arrest. Even a major fire that occurred at the Lesosibirsky LDK did not interfere. Half of the enterprise burned out, but it was thanks to Sherman, who quickly arranged the supply of materials necessary for the restoration of the plant, that the enterprise was able to quickly recover. However, in December 1981, Sherman was arrested.

He carried on his activities without hiding too much. In his diary, Sherman writes that he was invited to engage in supply operations in the Kurgan region by the then leadership of the regional committee. And it acted in the spirit of the decisions of the next plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, where Leonid Brezhnev called on the directors of state farms and chairmen of collective farms "to show independence and initiative on the ground." Some have shown. And three years later, at the November plenum of 1982, another question was posed point-blank — "about the restoration of the national economy in the country" and about tightening the screws in this connections.

The leadership in the Kurgan regional committee changed, and big "purges" began. With a dozen leaders

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enterprises and regional institutions were sentenced to serious terms. They came for Sherman. He was arrested in his apartment, the same one where he accepted money from "walkers" from state farms. Of the 90,000 rubles paid for the organization of supplies, which the investigation later called stolen, half were spent. On them, Sherman bought two cars, which he managed to thoroughly "kill" in three years of constant traveling. The money was spent on gasoline, paying for hotels, organizing "tables" and drinking with the right people. Finally, Sherman, already seriously ill,

he spent money on buying expensive medicines - mummy, ginseng. He paid for exotic for those times treatment with acupuncture and homeopathy. It was possible to recover about 45,000 rubles from Sherman as compensation for damage.

What was the scope of Sherman's activities? There is a very definite answer to this question. In the late 1980s, when private enterprise was again allowed in the USSR, and the crimes committed by Sherman ceased to be such, he, along with his lawyer, bombarded the authorities with requests for a review of the sentence. These materials also contain a scrupulous list of goods supplied by the "trader" to Siberian timber processing plants. In total, with his mediation, about 40 wagons of timber were shipped from the Lesosibirsk and Yenisei combines to the state farms of the Kurgan, Kustanai and Turgai regions - edged boards, slabs, beams, sleepers. Counter deliveries amounted to about 120 tons of wire rod, 60 tons of cable, 120 tons of pipe, three wagons of electric lamps, dozens of

units of technology.

5.

It is significant that none of the participants in the operations had any claims against Sherman. It is enough to read the testimony of the witnesses at the trial, which took place in June 1983.

Gerasimov, director of the state farm

"Ershovsky" (Kurgan region)

We had no other choice, so we went to the violation of financial discipline. We didn't have any funds and outfits, that's why we turned to Sherman. The state farm has no claims against Sherman. The whole forest went to household needs. We need the forest and now "desperately".

Komyakov, director of the Mayak state farm (Kurgan region)

We asked Sherman to help, because we knew that he gives forest to other state farms.

Money - 6000 rubles, I ordered to issue for delivery lumber.

I told foreman Ivanov that the money had to be paid to Sherman when the forest cleared up. The foreman Chudinov agreed on the same conditions.

Sherman never told us that he was a representative from the LDK and that he had brigades there.

I knew about his connections. He said he would help us do everything himself, and installed the light bulbs for us.

We know that lumber does not come to us, because the organs investigators seized the contracts for its supply.

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Doroshko, director of the Kozlov state farm (Kurgan region)

The farm is very big. It takes a lot to build. A lot of lumber is required. That's why me and Sherman and agreed.

Previously, we were engaged in logging, and we know the procedure for logging. We did not have funds for the forest. Sherman said that this will help.

The benefits of its supply of lumber are great. We have no complaints about Sherman. That's just for not delivering lumber (all incomplete deliveries were stopped at the end of 1981 by decision of the investigation. - M.K.).

Kuznetsov, director of the state farm "The First Seven-Year Plan" (Kostanay region)

I already knew that Sherman and Shirin were working for Doroshko. Called him. He said that reliable guys. So I decided to do the same. After all, we desperately needed the forest. There was no talk of brigades. They decided that the money should be given out on Shirin's expense order. 7000 rubles.

There was a joint agreement that money was required to start work on the supply of lumber, and therefore they gave out 7,000 rubles. They did not introduce themselves to any representatives of the LDK. Sherman said he had connections there. I know that we should have supplied the wire rod. But Sherman put it for us. The state farm has no claims against Sherman. Sherman did not deceive us. The state farm received a considerable profit from its lumber.

Vashchenko, director of the state farm "Shoptykolsky" (Kostanay region)

My deputy Kopylov brought Sherman to the state farm. In your conversation, it became clear that Sherman was in a position to help supply

lumber. There was no talk of brigades. I knew about the procedure for harvesting timber "on the vine". We still harvest timber legally. In this case, we deliberately went to the violation, since we needed to saw the material. I knew that similar contracts had already been signed by other state farms. All lumber received was used for household needs. And personally, I have no complaints about Sherman.

**Fomin, director of the state farm. K. Marx
(Kostanay region)**

At present and earlier we were engaged in logging in Tyumen, so I knew the procedure for logging.

We didn't have any funds, but we needed a forest. So we went to violations. All lumber went to the farm. We have claims only that the wood is underdelivered. We were told that the OBKhSS made an arrest.

**Odintsov, chairman of the collective farm.
Lomonosov (Kurgan region)**

My friend Strazhkov introduced me to Sherman. He didn't introduce Sherman at all. Offered his services for the rate of lumber. We agreed on a price - 600 rubles per car. Sherman spoke about the pipes that should be put on the LDK. But he said that he would get the pipes for the collective farm himself.

We didn't have funds for timber, for wagons. Sherman said he had connections that the outfits will get.

We were not interested in how Sherman would do it. We needed lumber at all costs. Even more lumber was delivered to us. Six cars instead of four. Sherman did not deceive us.

I think so, and so then I realized that Sherman was mediating between us and LDK. We repaired the damage with foreman Sivkov, as we were told so in the OBKhSS.

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Kopylov, foreman of the state farm

"Shoptykolsky" (Kostanay region)

Yes, we knew that they, Sherman and Shirin, were supplying lumber to other state farms. We learned from Doroshko (director of another state farm in the Kurgan region. - M.K.). The director of my state farm "Shoptykolsky" sent me to them.

We already knew that they were supplying timber at 12 rubles per cubic meter in addition to collection. Such a conversation was with Doroshko, that is, he told us about the terms of delivery.

Although we accepted Shirman on the staff, the director ordered the money in the amount of 8,000 rubles to be given to Sherman, since we felt that Sherman was in charge and we completely trusted him.

By mutual agreement and by order of the director, I leased the K-700 tractor to the LDK. How will they act
lumber - it did not concern us.

Indeed, we issued documents immediately for the amount
accountability, and lumber went later.

They didn't have any teams. They were just engaged in the rate of timber.

We didn't have funds. They also broke through the funds

on the forest and on the wagons.

There were cases when the forest went bad. We turned to Sherman. And things were getting better, then the forest was good.

I believe that Sherman did not deceive us in anything. He put up the forest, but not all of it. We know that the contracts were seized.

Ivanov, foreman of the state farm

"Mayak" (Kurgan region)

The entire agreement on the supply of lumber went through the engineer of the Ketovsky Department of Agriculture Varlamov. He introduced us to Sherman.

When we went to his house, Sherman told us that 6,000 rubles were needed for 10 wagons of lumber. I was given

reporting this amount. The director of the Vishnevsky state farm gave the same instruction to his foreman Chudinov, that is, to agree on the supply of timber and pay money in the amount of 6,000 rubles to Sherman.

Chudinov and I gave the money 5,000 rubles each. I didn't see him give them to Sherman. This is according to Chudinov. We left 1,000 rubles each for travel expenses, meals, paid for the hotel, other expenses.

No, we didn't have any funds. All this Sherman wanted for us. How he already did it, we were not interested. We needed lumber.

Then we were told that they had seized all the contracts, and that Sherman himself was also arrested. Lumber is not available to us stepped.

There were no conversations with Sherman that he was a representative of the LDK and that he had brigades there.

He said that he had connections there, and he would help us with the supply of lumber. That's why he was given money.

**Chudinov, foreman of the Vishnevsky state farm
(Kurgan region)**

I went to the Ketovsky department of agriculture and asked the engineer Varlamov about the supply of timber. I remember he advised me to contact Sherman.

At the apartment, Sherman told Ivanov and me that we had to pay 600 rubles for a wagon of lumber, and 6,000 rubles for 10 wagons. I reported everything to the director, and he instructed Sherman to pay the money and go with him to the Krasnoyarsk Territory.

I gave the money to Sherman, and he also said that for the conclusion of the contract for the supply of lumber, it is necessary to supply light bulbs to the LDK. But he will take it upon himself.

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Part of the money - 1000 rubles, I took myself for all other expenses. We bought two wheels for Sherman's car, the wheels were all worn out. On the road bought spare parts, gasoline. In general, 1000 rubles was spent on all expenses on the road.

Did Sherman say he was a LDK representative? No, there was no such conversation at all. About brigades too. He said he had connections and would help. We didn't have any funds, so we turned to Sherman. He secured funds. Signed contracts. But the forest did not go, because then the police seized the supply contracts and Sherman also arrested.

By agreement with the director, we compiled fictitious rows and statements to cover my account.

In my opinion, Sherman acted as an intermediary in all these operations. I know that Sherman installed the light bulbs for us at the LDK. How he did it, we do not know.

*From the minutes of the meeting of the Kustanai Regional
Court in the case of Mark Sherman, June 1983*

There are dozens of such testimonies in the Sherman case! And there is not a single one where witnesses would testify about the embezzlement of funds by Sherman, about his failure to fulfill his obligations. Everything that Sherman "signed up" for was done. And if the forest did not come in the end, then only through the fault of the authorities that froze all operations.

Even the prosecutors were unable to dispute this fact - it is written in black and white in Sherman's verdict: deliveries were made, the farms benefited from Sherman's activities. But the fact that this useful activity should be rewarded was unacceptable for the Soviet court. Sherman's "fees" for arranging deliveries were qualified

as embezzlement of state and public funds on an especially large scale using forged documents.

“Documents” are fake outfits that were issued by state and collective farms for supposedly existing teams of lumberjacks who were supposed to cut wood. From the point of view of today, these were typical cash-out operations. Cash was needed to pay Sherman. Here in the state farms they received them according to their own concocted

lenke documents. What does Sherman have to do with it?

6.

The question is rhetorical. As the “trader” himself writes, “the decision was made to put me in jail.” But what about all those who created the infrastructure for its activities? Employees of local district committees and district departments of agriculture? Directors and chairmen of state farms-collective farms? If the scheme itself is criminal, then it is necessary to plant all the participants. Is not it? Not at all.

They twisted, sculpted ... With interrogations, with witnesses, protocols. Nothing is legal. If Sherman is involved as an intermediary, the directors [of state farms] and others must be smeared. After all, all these fake documents for the payment of dead souls (forest fellers), on which the expenses for the trip were written off, turned out to be not written by Sherman's hand. Well, what a consequence! The term of detention expires, and the judge requires new examinations. A lot of misfortune and inconsistencies... Repeatedly tried to direct the investigation to the "legitimate Russian

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lo", that is, to arrest all the leaders involved. But then the regional committee bit the bit: to judge only Sherman! How? You are lawyers, you decide!!

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

The case was limited to Sherman, Shirin and a couple of foremen. They were planted. Sherman was given 14 years in prison. But has the system changed? Hardly. All the same, the farms did not have boards and timber. And still there were people who ensured its supply. It's just that the name of the new "trader" was not Sherman. And he was invited to "engage in the MTS of the region" by the new first secretary of the regional committee.

It simply could not be otherwise. Official the distribution system could not cope with its functions. The resulting "voids" were filled by enterprising people. Informal ties between state enterprises and the organization of "unscheduled" various flows between them were indeed a mass phenomenon. As well as the massive "landing" of such entrepreneurs as Mark Sherman.

In the mid-60s, Boris Felshin was convicted, accused of "commercial activity in the supply of alcohol to organizations and enterprises." In 1970, Vladimir Andrushko received a term, who, like Sher

man, was engaged in deliveries forests, however, in Ukraine. In the late 70s, Sergei Demurchan was arrested and spent several years in the camps, who built supply schemes.

Official
distribution
the system failed
with their functions.
formed
"voids" filled
enterprising people.

timber and cement enterprises of the Altai Territory. When he was released, he again took up a familiar job. And got time again. As stated in the verdict - for

Now private property is allowed. About unearned income the authorities are silent. But the layout remains the same or an entrepreneur in a subordinate position official is in command.

was considered "commercial mediation" and "unjustifiably enriched by 22,000 rubles".

And there are dozens of such stories, if not hundreds.

But besides stating the fact that without defense

a pure private trader could not

even get through

state Soviet economy, something else is also important. There was a problem with the forest - Sherman was given the opportunity to solve it and earn a living from it. But the authorities changed, and the "trader" was shown his real place. In the colony. What has changed since then? Much, but

the main thing remained unchanged.

Yes, private property is now allowed. The authorities are silent about unearned income. But the alignment remains the same - the entrepreneur in a subordinate position, the official - in command. Only "their own" businessmen can earn. And those who want and can be independent - like Khodorkovsky, to Krasnokamensk! Sew mittens!

But why is this important? In the end, that Sherman, that Khodorkovsky, and all the rest - they are by no means angels. They are tough, cynical... Much of what they did is in conflict with public morality. Do not steal, do not deceive - this is far from being about them. Why sympathize with the strong and rich? Ah, they

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fell from a height to the ground. They were rich and became poor. Well... it happens. And who will sympathize with the millions of their fellow citizens living in poverty? How did they live under Soviet rule, how do they live today, in Russia?

I agree, that's all. But it seems that without them, without the rich and enterprising, these millions of poor people will remain so poor. To build something that can benefit the whole society, will provide an opportunity to develop and live better, and many people live better at once, today only a released private initiative can. Enough to look around. Something new and useful has grown up in Russia over the last twenty years, whatever one may say. And it was by no means the state or officials who raised this new one. Rather, on the contrary, they seek to strangle it all.

CHAPTER IX

Trade "mafia"

On June 24, 2009, there was a big stir in the Perekrestok supermarket on Osenny Boulevard in Moscow. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin paid a lightning visit to the store. He went to the counter with sausages. He consulted some charts he had brought with him and stated that the markup was as high as 52 percent. Then he went to the refrigerator with fresh meat. It turned out that pork is sold with a markup of 120 percent. Putin called it too high - this, they say, is not in any civilized country. A representative of the X5Retail Group, which owns the Perekrestok chain, who arrived with Putin, nodded obsequiously: "Yes, yes! Tomorrow we'll cut it in half." Just as swiftly Putin

ste with the accompanying left the store.

The prime minister returned to the White House for a meeting devoted to the drafting of the Trade Law. Five months later, this document was adopted by the State Duma and signed by President Dmitry Medvedev.

Result: the authorities have the opportunity to introduce marginal markups on goods sold in stores, meaningless rules of interaction with suppliers are imposed on retail chains. Introduced also

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restrictions on the opening of new stores - retail chains are prohibited from occupying more than 25% in local markets.

Who calculates these percentages? What are municipal statistics? What are the marginal margins and rules for working with suppliers? If we discard the husk, the new law meant one thing - the development of the industry was placed under the control of the state, that is, novnikov.

Legislative changes in 2010 were the most serious step to limit the development of trade in Russia since the late 80s, when the punishment for speculation was abolished. During that period, trade in Russia, or as it is now fashionable to call retail, has come a long way. From the famous "Puddles" - a flea market near the Luzhniki stadium, to the networks Auchan and "Perekryostok". The retail industry is perhaps one of the few sectors of the modern Russian economy that have grown from scratch without parasitizing on the Soviet "legacy".

Its main engine of development was the market, free prices. Buyer competition. Now here, as in many others on

boards, the authorities want to win back. What are they guided by? To be honest, it's hard for me to understand this. After all, it is obvious that the market, private initiative is the only principle on which a complex and, in fact, very vulnerable network trading business can be organized.

Legislative
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Why doesn't the government understand this? Perhaps the whole point is that Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his deputy, an old acquaintance from the time of the St. Petersburg mayor's office, Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Zubkov, who is responsible for trade, were formed at a time when the words "trader" and "seller" were almost abusive? And speculation, that is, "resale for profit", was a criminal offense (up to seven years in prison with confiscation of property in accordance with Article 154 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR)? Don't know. I don't have an answer to this question.

But, in any case, for those who destroy modern market trade, driving it into the framework of state regulation, it is useful to remember what Soviet trade was like. When on the shelves of state stores there was at least a rolling ball. And all goods with a minimum consumer value were sold under the counter and by pull.

Soviet courts
stamped
sentences for
articles on theft
in especially large
size, energy
which could
solve the problem of
supply of the population
food
and consumer
more goods
in the last century.

Getting used to today's abundance on the shelves, it's hard to imagine. Meanwhile, all this was. Just like there were thousands of people who traded in business, parasitizing on an ugly and senseless system. Many of them were in jail. Someone - "tower". Soviet courts recognized them as embezzlers of socialist property,

brought sentences under articles about embezzlement in especially large

Chapter IX. Trade "mafia"

sizes. But these were all people whose energy, had it not been wasted senselessly, could have solved the problem of supplying the population with food and consumer goods in the last century.

1.

But enough pathos. Let's start with a specific case. From a textbook story. 60s of the last century. A small town of Senaki in Western Georgia, not far from Kutaisi. City center. The area where the local market is located. On the first floors of houses

overlooking the square, and in separate kiosks - with dozen shops and shops. They sell clothes, groceries, books, jewelry and more. Near the house are several restaurants. Formally, all this is state-owned. All goods that are sold there are state-owned and trade is carried out at prices set by the state. The salaries of sellers are also fixed in accordance with the tariff scale approved by the state.

Naturally, this is a beggarly salary, and it is impossible to live on it. Everyone who works in the shops in the center of Senaki is doing everything possible and impossible to increase it. How?

Collective farmers, for example, steal crops from the fields and sell them on the market instead of selling them to the state at fixed prices. Market, or in this case "bazaar" prices are several times higher than the prices in state stores. But there are products on the market, but they are not in stores. Selling goods at a high price, traders in the bazaar unfasten

a significant part of their profits to the market administration and local police, so that they turn a blind eye to the illegal origin of the goods. The transfer of these payments, or better to say bribes, takes place both in monetary form and in kind - in goods sold.

The same thing happens in nearby state-owned stores. Goods are sold at prices several times higher than officially established. The sellers simply replace the labels on the goods and put them on the showcase at a new price, 2-3 times higher than that assigned by the parent trade organization. Naturally, they put their profits in their pocket far from completely. Most of it goes to the store manager. He passes it on to trade inspectors from the trade department of the local district executive committee, as well as to other inspectors - the police and the local OBKhSS.

Thus, a stable and viable system is formed, a "trade cluster", the cementing beginning of which is corruption, penetrating the community from top to bottom. Daniel Levy, an emigrant from Georgia, a research fellow at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, has devoted an entire study to the analysis of the functioning of this kind of pseudo-market structures. Its value lies primarily in the fact that Levi acts not only as an observer and researcher

body, but also a direct participant in the described processes. His older brothers worked as the same employees of state stores who re-pasted price tags on goods.

As Levy writes, price inflation in retail stores compared to official

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level was in Georgia (or, let's say, at least in Georgia) of a total character. Fortunately, there were objective prerequisites. Take, for example, the origin of goods. Most of them, sold through the state trading network, were domestic, produced in the USSR. A smaller part is imports of Eastern European origin (from Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, etc.). Imported a priori was considered the best. However, the price tags, which, on the basis of standards lowered from above, were approved by the trade department of the local district executive committee, the origin of the goods

ra was not taken into account.

Prices in general had a very remote relation to the real cost of goods and the degree of demand for them in the consumer market. And they were always, as Levy writes, below the price that people were really willing to pay for them. This was the base on which the "game" was built.

In practice, everything happened outrageously primitive. A shipment of shirts arrived. They have price labels on them. In the same place - the date and place of production, composition, instructions for use (washing conditions, ironing, etc.). That is, you can't just tear off the price tag. It must be replaced.

Levi with his brothers

carefully cut prices

nicknames with the official price. In the local state (like all around) printing houses, they printed new labels (with the date, manufacturer, etc.), sewed them on shirts

The prices were very distant relation to real value goods and degree its relevance on the consumer market.

kam and already with a new price they laid out the goods on the counter. Instead of four rubles, it now cost 12, or even all 16 rubles. This happened with almost all new things that came into the store.

Naturally, there was a "fight" with this. It was forbidden to print the price tag in the printing press. And of course, price tags continued to be printed. Unless their price included a "premium" for risk.

An interesting question is how the cost of a bribe was determined. Levy writes that there was no bargaining as such, during which the exact amount would have been clarified. The parties simply knew what the right amount of the bribe would be. This knowledge was formed on the basis of interaction with contractors, constant communication with people working in the same area.

The system of illegal sales, covered by a system of bribes, functioned successfully, since each of its participants knew exactly the size of his share in the income. senior officials, the police, store-level management, and the salespeople—everyone. The profit sharing mechanism worked efficiently and was able to adapt to changes in

settings.

The share of the Levy family, which was practically on the lowest floor of the pyramid, was small in these incomes. As he himself writes, the average "margin" to the official price was 200-300%. For example, on a shirt with a state price of 4 rubles, the family "earned" an additional 8 rubles. But of these, she kept only one ruble for herself, and seven rubles were transferred to the director of the store. He kept the ruble for himself, and gave the rest to the director of the bazaar. At the level of market administration

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settled two or three rubles. The rest was sent to the district police officer. He shared with his friends in the local regional department of internal affairs.

2.

Levy's story about the family business could be a script for a film in the style of old Soviet Georgian cinema. Levi writes that although he was about 8 years old, he was directly involved in the process. On Sundays, the Senaki market square was seething with a crowd of people. These days, in front of the store where the Levy brothers worked, a table measuring three and a half by one and a half meters was exhibited. Goods were laid out on it - stacks of clothes, shoes, jewelry.

The job of the boy, Daniel, was to sit under the table and, with the help of a typesetting stamp, put on the sole of the shoe the price that his brother announced to the buyer. Usually the client, having approached the table, and having become interested in shoes, saw pairs of either very small or too large sizes. There was no price tag on them. The buyer inquired - is there, say, the 43rd size? Brother Levi began to rummage through the boxes. I did this for a long time and said - unfortunately, they have already run out. Buyers, as a rule, were ready for such a response. And they usually continued to insist, because they knew that the "last", but by chance, the remaining pair would definitely "be found". And, of course, she showed up. Long searches were necessary, first of all, in order to understand how solvent the buyer was and how ready he was to make a purchase. After evaluating these factors, the older brother

made a decision on the price, called it, and the younger one immediately put it on the shoes.

Or here's another episode, with the sale of "left" products of a local clothing factory. First, the Levi organized a formal purchase of goods at the factory. "Tested" how much the thing is in demand. If people bought, say, the same T-shirts, then Levy ordered additional supplies from the factory for seamstresses. The "left" product was produced right there at the factory from the saved raw materials and was not reflected in the official reporting. These T-shirts were noticeably cheaper than the official ones - 1.5 rubles instead of three. They were all sold at the same price, inflated compared to the state price, at 8 rubles. Naturally, at the same time, clothes officially received from the factory were sent to the back of the store and remained unsold.

Another way to make money is to create an artificial shortage of goods. Levy describes it with the example of rubber galoshes. This type of footwear has always been in short supply, and there was a great demand for it. Especially in winter, especially from the local peasants. The delivery of galoshes took place 2-3 times a year. Daniel's older brother used to put either one left or one right galosh on the counter. And when the buyers asked if you had, say, the 5th size of the measure, he usually answered confidently - "Run out."

If the buyer began to insist, and was clearly willing to pay much more than the official price, Daniel's brother would offer an "option". Like, they didn't have galoshes left in the store, but if the buyer is ready to pay 2 rubles to this boy - and poked his finger at his younger brother, then he is ready to run to a nearby store,

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where possible, have them, and bring the right size. But only there it is expensive, and galoshes cost eight rubles, no less. Usually the buyer, already in the mood to buy, agreed. Naturally, galoshes were in the "other store". And then on the operation it was possible to earn not the usual 200-300% of the official price, but all 500%.

3.

Finally, perhaps the key point is the interaction interaction with law enforcement and regulatory authorities. In addition to the income from the sale of each item regularly transferred up the chain, another type of "tax" was levied on local "businessmen" in Senaki. Simplifying, it could be called an "extraordinary contribution".

In practice, it looked like this: a district police officer or squad from the district police station entered the store, and, being aware of illegal trade at inflated prices, began to look for goods with these very inflated prices. Naturally, they were. At this time, while the policemen were rummaging through things, the store manager and his employees quickly collected from 600 to 800 rubles - such an amount was considered sufficient, and handed them over to the senior officer.

Another mechanism for collecting rents in excess of the usual payments was to what did the police say

Except regularly transmitted up along the income chain from sales, from local "businessmen" was charged and another type of tax. His could be called "extraordinary contribution".

hang out with a customer who went out and bought something from a store at an overpriced price. After that, he turned back already accompanied by police, and a confrontation was held. In one such case, Daniel Levy's brother, upon seeing a customer returning with a police officer, simply ran away from his store. The police tried to detain him, but he managed to escape from the market square and hid with relatives in one of the neighboring villages.

Unfortunately for the Levy family, the policeman who raided the store turned out to be one of the rare honest policemen in Georgia at that time (this, Levy writes, already looked like a joke in Georgia in the 1960s). His older brother had to go into hiding for several weeks until he managed to reach an agreement with the head of the police department, who hushed up the case. It cost Levi's father 1,500 rubles. Seriously at the time

money.

In 1966, when Levi's elder brother turned 23, the deputy head of the district police department raided the store with an inspection. After the search, he drove a truck into which he loaded all the goods found in the store and took them to the police warehouse as material evidence. Brother Levy and several others managed to sneak away during the search. They hid with friends.

My brother took a train ticket and left for a few days to stay with his uncle, who lived in Sukhumi. He returned only when the money was transferred to the "necessary" people and the goods were returned. As it turned out later, the raid on the store was carried out on the personal initiative of the deputy head of the local police as part of the annual campaign to "gath

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additional income". This kind of "on the ride", as Levy writes,

occurred every 6–12 months. The requisitions that had to

real meaning
checks were not induction
order in downstream
divisions, and collection
additional rent.

to pay according to their results, were perceived as quite an adequate part of "taxation".

In addition to the militia, Levy writes about another controlling body - a higher trading organization, or "office". Once a year, its representatives

went to the store to audit goods and trade inventory. In addition to scheduled inspections of

there were also unscheduled, unexpected for stores

for inspection. The latter were especially dangerous - illegally purchased goods and goods with inflated relative to official prices could be found in the store. During these checks, which usually lasted several days, representatives of the "office" checked the records, the presence of receipts, and compared them with commodity balances.

However, the real meaning of these checks was not to restore order in the lower divisions, but to collect additional rent. That is how the inspectors themselves considered the purpose of their visit. They stayed in the city for two or three weeks, checking at least a dozen shops at the same time. In such cases, money for the inspectors was collected collectively, from all shops, and then through one of the respected people of the city, who was personally acquainted with the inspectors, was transferred to them when they met in a hotel or restaurant. The amount could be 10,000–20,000 rubles, and calculated

It was like about 1000 rubles from the store. This was presented to the inspectors as a gift, a token of gratitude from the city's "business community."

Having received the offering, the inspectors, of course, they still left records of numerous violations in the inspection report. But they concerned primarily the lack of money, which had to be filled. And that some grave and criminally punishable violations, such as the sale of illegally produced (stolen) goods, overpricing, etc. remained out of sight of the verifiers. This episode ends Daniel Levy's analysis of the functioning of state trade in Soviet Georgia.

The value of his work as a scientific study is debatable. In my opinion, it suffers from excessive straightforwardness and hypertrophied attention to the personal experience of the author. But from the point of view of understanding how things were done in the sphere of trade in the Transcaucasus and other southern regions of the USSR in the 60s and 70s, this is an informative read. Despite the optimistic description of the "adventures" of the merchant brother, it is felt that they walked, as they say, along the edge. And, most likely, sooner or later someone from the family would still sit down. Which in reality, however, did not happen. In 1971, the family emigrated to Israel.

4.

But the system described by Daniel Levy on the example of a corrupt "trading cluster" in Senaki has not gone anywhere. Of course, such colorful details as in Georgia, trade from under the floor, for example, in the central

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did not have any other regions of Russia. However, at its core, the principle remained the same.

It was possible to buy freely in stores only a limited list of essential goods - bread, milk, cereals, flour products, canned food. Everything else was a so-called deficit. When a shortage party was thrown onto the shelves, the goods were immediately swept away by consumers. There was a shortage of fashionable clothes, household appliances, materials for repairs, shoes, fruit, meat, sausage... Yes, almost everything without which it is impossible to imagine the life of a modern person today.

Solve the problem of deficit could increase trading price to those who use goods in demand. However, such approach was rejected by ideological considerations.

A characteristic detail is that an increase in the trade price of goods in demand to the equilibrium level could solve the problem of scarcity. That is, such that the number of buyers able to purchase this product would correspond to the volume of the product available for sale. However, this approach was rejected on ideological grounds. "I have heard privately from a fairly high-ranking pricing official this explanation for a number of scarce commodities," writes Aron Kazenelinboigen. — He believed that the existence of low prices was caused by the following political considerations. Reduced prices, in his opinion, allow the creation of

to give the population the illusion of the availability of these goods, that, in principle, a person with a low income can buy them - you just have to stand in line. In that

case, the impossibility of buying without a queue is due, they say, only to temporary difficulties, a temporary shortage of goods. As the production of scarce goods increases, the queues will shrink."

Well, in practice, the existence of a shortage gave rise to a system of illegal sale of goods through the state trading network. The mechanisms could be very different. For example, a store saleswoman informs her friends when a scarce product will be delivered - the buyer comes and buys the goods. Or, for example, an interesting form - to "postpone" the goods. A scarce thing is removed from the showcase (counter), hidden from ordinary buyers and sold to the right

people.

The amount of additional payment in such cases is minimal. But the whole secret is to find an approach to a person who "sits" on a deficit. You need to make friends with the seller. Get him interested. Gradually, a proven

contingent of buyers is formed around the seller. Not

Trading system
mutated in the USSR
into the nursery
corruption, introduction
the worst possible
behavioral
practitioner

some of them also act as speculators, that is, resellers of goods.

The overwhelming majority of sellers are involved in such schemes. After all, there are scarce goods in almost all stores. And even if the new salesperson who came into the system is, say, an honest young girl (which will already cause a chuckle from those who remember the days of the "scoop"), then the head of the department will force her to work in the "scheme".

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After all, he should receive from her part of the income from the sale of scarce goods. Because he, in turn, needs to transfer part of the income to the store director. Tom - to the district trade and to the base, where, in fact, scarce goods are given out to the network. After all, the next time the deficit can be given to another store. At the end of the 1950s, writes Katsenelinboigen, a similar chain was opened in the USSR, reaching the very top echelon - the Deputy Minister of Trade of the USSR.

The Soviet government never learned how to deal with this phenomenon. And really, how? The average salary of a salesperson in a store is noticeably less than 100 rubles per month. And at the same time at hand, in almost complete resources at their disposal, which can bring in revenues of an order of magnitude greater. Add - a high level of personal security. Who did the saleswoman call? For whom did you set aside the goods? Finding out is not easy. Did you put it off? Maybe he's just lying there.

As a result, the trading system in the USSR mutated into a breeding ground for corruption and the introduction of the worst possible behavioral practices. And this is an inevitable evil of the state organization of distribution. Where there is a scarce resource and administratively regulated access to it, theft, bribes and the formation of illegal sales channels are inevitable.

5.

Draconian punitive measures only raise the risk premium and create additional blood clots in the supply chain. However, the phenomenon cannot be fundamentally defeated

able. One of the most eloquent examples of this is the wave of repressions against the "merchant mafia" in Moscow under Yuri Andropov. One of the symbols of that era was the case of Yuri Sokolov, the director of the Moscow store Eliseevsky, who was shot in December 1984.

Sokolov was born in Moscow in 1925. Front-line soldier, was awarded several orders and medals. After demobilization he worked as a taxi driver. Then I went to the sellers. In the 50s, he served a couple of years - he was convicted of fraud, but then acquitted. After his release, he again got a job in trade. He made a good career, and in 1963 he was appointed Deputy General Director of the legendary Moscow grocery store No. 1, better known as Eliseevsky.

Inside this pompous building with stucco and columns on Gorky Street (today Tverskaya) housed the main grocery store of the USSR. However, despite the high-profile status, the store's shelves did not shock visitors with their assortment. That is, of course, there was no comparison with the counters of the Soviet "selpo" "Eliseevsky". But with the current "ABC of Taste" - too. However, the relative poverty of the Yeliseyevsky counters was deceptive. Here you could get some real delicacies. But it is to get, not to buy.

How? Through the pre-order system or, as they said then, through the back door. Imported alcohol and cigarettes, black and red caviar, Finnish servedat, ham, balyki, chocolates, coffee, citrus fruits... All this was in grocery store No. 1 and its seven branches. And all this could be purchased by representatives from

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an abusive circle of clients of "Eliseevsky" - party bosses, their relatives (including the family of the then Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev), writers, cosmonauts, academicians, generals, etc.

Naturally, in order to break into this "community", one had to pay. Either money or barter - services and products useful to the management of the department store. And the management is Yuri Sokolov, who headed the department store in 1972 and during the next ten years, during the most extreme stagnation, managed the system. As it was later written in his "Shooting" sentence, "using a responsible official position, Sokolov for personal gain from January 1972 to October 1982 systematically received bribes from his subordinates for the fact that through higher trade organizations he ensured uninterrupted

delivery to the grocery store in an assortment that is beneficial for bribe givers".

In other words, Sokolov distributed the bribes received in various forms among the heads of wholesale depots, foreign trade organizations, departments of the Ministry of Commerce in order to ensure uninterrupted supplies to selected clients.

Naturally, this kind of activity would not have been possible if Sokolov had not had what is today called a "roof". The director of "Eliseevsky" was friends with Nikolai Tregubov, head of the trade department of the Moscow City Executive Committee, and Vladimir Promyslov, chairman of the Moscow City Executive Committee. At the top of the pyramid of Sokolov's patrons was the all-powerful "master" of Moscow, the first secretary of the city party committee and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU Viktor Grishin. In addition, everyth

whoever needed it, were aware that the director of Eliseevsky was friendly with Brezhnev's daughter Galina and her husband, Deputy Interior Minister Yuri Churbanov.

However, on November 10, 1982, Leonid Brezhnev died. Soon the system rebuilt by Sokolov also collapsed. In November, the head of one of the KGB departments came to his office. He extended his hand for a handshake, and when Sokolov responded in kind, held a painful hold and, pulling the director of Eliseevsky from the table with the button for calling the guard, announced his arrest. Searches and arrests of store employees immediately began. In addition to Sokolov, criminal charges were brought against one of his deputies and the heads of three departments. Their main point is "the theft of food products on a large scale and bribery."

As it turned out later, criminal cases against senior employees of Eliseevsky were initiated in October 1982, even before Brezhnev's death. Sokolov was placed under surveillance. A month before his arrest, his office was stuffed with "bugs" and various kinds of recording equipment (for this, a "short circuit of the electrical wiring" was arranged in the store, the elevators were turned off and "repairmen" were called). At the same time, "technical special equipment" was installed in all branches of Eliseevsky. As a result, all meetings between Sokolov and his subordinates were recorded on audio and video media.

Among other things, it was recorded that every Friday the heads of branches come to Sokolov and give him envelopes with a week's "proceeds" from illegal operations. Sokolov added up the received

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money in the safe. Then he handed them over to the head of the trade department of the Moscow City Executive Committee, Nikolai Tregubov, and other influential people. On one of the Fridays, after the transfer of money, all those who arrived were arrested. Then it was Sokolov's turn.

According to eyewitnesses, during the arrest, the director of Eliseevsky kept calm. Apparently, he was counting on his extensive connections in the highest echelons of power. But it soon became clear that his arrest was not a random action. The KGB was involved in the "development" of the director of "Yeliseevsky". The operation was carefully planned and aimed at compromising Leonid Brezhnev's inner circle, including the then first secretary of the Moscow city committee, Viktor Grishin. Grishin had a chance to become General Secretary. However, the "revealed" large-scale abuses in Moscow trade reduced them to zero. KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov was elected General Secretary

pov.

When Sokolov realized that this was the case, he began to give detailed confessions. Where, how much, to whom, under what conditions... The former director of department store No. 1, apparently, hoped to help the investigation mitigate his fate. However, either he said too much, and there were fears that his revelations would not hit those who came to power after Brezhnev, or for propaganda purposes, but Sokolov was sentenced to death. He was upset

lyang.

Even before the end of the investigation in the Sokolov case and before the indictment was handed over to the court, wholesale arrests of directors of major metropolitan

gov enterprises. In total, since the summer of 1983, more than 15,000 people have been prosecuted in the system of the capital's Glavtorg.

In the very heart of the USSR, in Moscow, a real "criminal empire" was revealed. A criminal community consisting of more than seven hundred people - directors

of shops, trading depots, functionaries of various ranks.

The sums of damage were called astronomical for those times ba to the state and bribes passing through the hands of the accused - millions of rubles.

Dozens of trials resulted in long prison sentences.

Sergei Naniev, director of the Smolensk department store, shot himself. Mkhitar Ambartsumyan, director of the Dzerzhinsky fruit and vegetable base, was shot. What was he charged with? In short, he dealt with postscripts, falsified data on the safety and volume of discarded products, and also took money from store directors for giving them the types of vegetables most in demand among buyers. From all this activity he had "unearned income". The sentence was carried out in 1986.

Total in the system
capital Glavtorg,
starting from summer
1983, to the criminal
responsibilities were
over
15 thousand people.

6.

But the question is, has anything changed in the work of the Soviet trade system after the wave of repressions against the "trade mafia"? Something - yes. But

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the very principles of operation are not. Let's listen to what the direct participant in the process says. This is the manager of one of the Moscow fruit and vegetable shops, whom Sergei Belanovsky interviewed in 1986:

Q: Who does your store report to, where do you get your products from, who do you report to?

Answer: Formally, the store is subordinate to the fruit and vegetable association, which, in turn, is part of Glavmosplodoovoshchprom (Main Directorate under the Moscow City Executive Committee). This association covers several regions. In Moscow, there are about 20 such fruit and vegetable associations. A little less than in Moscow districts. Such an association includes 20-30 or up to 50 specialized fruit and vegetable stores. We are on the balance sheet of this association, we are accountable to it for the fulfillment of the plan. It conducts audits of stores to check the condition of material assets. The Disciplinarian
In addition, we are subordinate to the trade inspectorate, the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the department for combating the theft of socialist property, the organs of the local police, public organizations such as people's control, administrative inspection. In addition, there is a fire supervision and sanitation epistation.

Question: Do you receive the goods from the base to which they are attached?

Answer: Yes, we are attached to the base from which we receive the goods. First, we place an order for goods, and it is assumed that the next day this product should arrive from the base to our store.

Question: How do you do it?

Answer: Call. Every day I call the merchandisers at the base and order: cabbage - 2 tons, carrots - 200 kilograms, oranges - 1 ton, etc.

BUSINESS IN THE USSR

Question: On what basis do you form these applications?

Answer: Based on the demand of the population, which can be seen from the commodity balances in the store for each type of product. no capu sty - you need to order, no onions - you need to order, etc.

Question: Do you roughly know the daily turnover for these types of goods?

Answer: He hesitates a lot. Not even by seasons, but by days - holidays, weekends. The quality of the product matters. Here you need to have intuition so that the goods are not stale, and there are no big losses.

Question: Does the base always satisfy your requests?

Answer: If possible, of course, satisfies. A good product, however, can go to the store where there is a personal contact on the principle of "you to me - I to you." A good product will not be given to strangers. A good product is one that is in demand, with a good condition. The store lives on condition. I have to pay dozens of people out of my own pocket - this is money that I should not show anywhere ("live" money).

Question: Where does the money in trading come from?

Answer: Suppose you are given a condition: 2 tons of oranges - this is 4 thousand rubles. It would seem that a small percentage of waste is installed on them - only 1.5%. But if the oranges are good, then in practice there will be no more than 0.2–0.5% waste. The rest is yours to keep. From 4 thousand - this is 40 rubles. If everything is sold in a day, then these 40 rubles are in your pocket. You can "make" money on the container. The box weighs 2 kg, and they write 2 kg 200 g on the invoice. If you multiply 200 g by 200 boxes, you get an extra 40 kg of goods, this gives you 80 rubles a day.

Q: Is this percentage of waste at the mercy of the base or not?

Answer: No. All goods that come to the base are inspected by experts. If the goods are imported, then foreign experts

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non-commercial chamber. They "give" this extra interest on Cuban oranges and Hungarian apples. Previously, it was more preferential, now they are tightened up. According to rumors, this chamber was almost completely arrested, so they are now very careful
evaluate, the percentage of waste is reduced to a minimum level,
you often don't fit into it.

Question: And where do the extra 200 g come from in the boxes?

Answer: When the goods arrive, there is a column "weight with a box" on the invoice. But the boxes are different. The weight of the box is written by the commodity manager of the base or the head of the shop that releases the goods. He writes to his friend the weight that they both need. By
After the sale of the goods, they divide the money in half.

Q: What about an unfamiliar face?

Answer: When the weight of the box received from the base is not satisfactory, then the representatives of the base are called, and they review the weight of this box. Therefore, an expert from the base is inclined to play it safe. But on the other hand, they can put pressure on him to record this percentage less. For example, a product is rotten at the base, it contains 20% waste, and an expert cannot write more than 5%, otherwise a check will come to the base, there will be a trial, etc. Here at the base with shops

we may have such agreements: somewhere they give
an overestimated percentage of substandard, but somewhere understated, so that one compensated for the other, and the store manager got
some amount of money for the service.

The next article of "live" money is the left product. Now it is almost not practiced, as it is associated with great risk. The left product is also taken on the basis of fake documents. It is accepted, sold quickly and nowhere is a fic

siruyut, there are "live" money.

Question: Does the opposite happen when you have to pay?

Answer: Of course it does. If you make a mistake, for example, as an imported product, it starts to rot. These losses are nobody to you

will not cover if you did not give a telephone message on time in terms of quality. For example, oranges came, and they indicated the percentage of non-conformity - 2%, and you looked - it's all 10%. It is necessary to give a telephone message very quickly so that the merchandiser arrives.

Question: Do you have such a right?

Answer: Yes, there is. But if the instruction has passed time after the receipt of the goods, and you do not send a telegram managed, then everything - the train left. You made a mistake that you will pay for yourself. For perishable goods (grapes, strawberries), this period is 4 hours, and for the rest goods - up to one day.

Question: For what reasons can you not meet these 4 hours?

Answer: Visually inspected the goods - like nothing. The store is in turmoil. And then the goods suddenly flowed. At the base, he was frozen, and was not immediately visible. It happens that the goods did not go on sale due to the fact that the hawkers did not come out to work, and the goods are tender, dying.

In order to avoid losses, it is also necessary to comply with the norms of storage of goods, their natural loss. The rate of natural attrition with a store turnover of 150,000 rubles a month is about 700 rubles, but they must not be exceeded.

In general, if we talk about the expenses of "live" money of financially responsible store employees, then these expenses are quite large. For example, payment to any driver in any store is required from any goods that he brought. It is 2-3 rubles for a cheap product. If the product is good - 5-7 rubles, especially since it helps to unload the car. Thus, if 5-10 cars are received per day, approximately 30 rubles must be returned.

There is a fee for each loader - every day you have to give him 1 ruble for lunch, in large stores - 2 rubles. There are usually about 5 loaders working in the Vegetable-Fruit store. So, there are no more five rubles.

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There was such a case. They wanted to imprison one store manager, but they couldn't. Then the OBKhSS officers gathered all the loaders and interrogated them. They confessed that they received 2 rubles a day for lunch. We multiplied the number of loaders by the number of working days per year and by the number of years worked this director in the store and counted the amount of money from data for this time to loaders. A charge was brought: "Where did you get 15,000 rubles to feed your porters?" On this basis, he was imprisoned.

Question: What will happen if you don't "feed" the movers?

Answer: "Do not feed" them. They start getting angry. The director depends on the movers. The loader is his "right hand". It depends on how the goods will be received. He can break the box, he can steal more goods than "should be." You can't offend the porter. In general, you can't offend anyone in trade, you can't even put a drunken cleaner and packer in their place, because they know what's going on in the store and can report it to the OBKhSS, and there they respond to every call, even anonymous ones. They'll come right back to check. Why do you need such adventures? It turns out that you need to drive the workers, but at the same time curry favor with everyone. The same goes for the buyer. A literate buyer can get caught and, if he gets angry, he will call the OBHSS or the trade inspectorate. The Book of Complaints and Suggestions is just an ornament; it does not weigh me down. In it, a Soviet citizen pours out his "pain and sorrow" for nothing. No one has ever been punished for the complaints it contains. Here is a call to the OBKhSS, if it is made correctly, this is a different matter, the consequences can be serious.

Question: What other items of expenditure of "live" money do materially responsible workers have?

Answer: The cost of exporting containers is very high. The export of a car with empty containers from the store to the base or to the container plant costs from 10 to 15 rubles. In principle, this work should be done

centrally, but in reality it is not executed anywhere. The practice is this: first you need to call the base and place an order. On this call, the driver will arrive, and you must give him the specified amount. If you do not do this, then no one will ever come to you again. You will "fill up" with containers, you will be fined for

this and can even be fired under the article.

Question: Is this fee (10-15 rubles) paid daily?

Answer: Practically yes. For the daily removal of containers and garbage. In addition, the container is divided into returnable and non-returnable. For example measures, imported boxes cost nothing, but they must be exported; if they accumulate in the yard, then there may be complaints from residents. The removal of one car of garbage containers costs about 20 rubles.

The expenditure part is, of course, all inspection organizations. In order to "get better", they need to be given a "comrade", and many take it with money: the administrative inspection, according to

hot guard, sanitary and epidemiological station.

Question: How do they come, because they are not alone?

Answer: Many alone. For example, firefighters, representatives of the sanitary and epidemiological station. In order not to send employees for medical examinations (they will lose at least half a day on this), they have to "buy" a doctor to examine them on the spot. The arrival of the doctor costs ten rubles.

There are shops that pay inspection bodies, including OBHSS. They are paid about 500 rubles a month. If there are 20 stores in the association, then 2-3 of them usually pay to the authorities. Employees of the authorities live well with them, and the plan for "catching" is being carried out at the remaining 18 stores. On the deeds of those who

tit, they, of course, look through their fingers.

Question: Is that their conscious policy?

Answer: Yes, of course. For this, those two shops that steal money from the OBKhSS can sell "left" goods and check out other things.

Question: And now, in recent years, nothing has changed?

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Answer: Now they are more afraid. OBKhSS employees are afraid and therefore they take them, but with great caution. Their incomes, of course, decreased. Before that, they were millionaires.

Question: Who else has to give money? Do all inspection organizations take money or not?

Answer: Not necessarily all. They may not take 30–40%, but they may have their own stores from which they "feed". If they do not take from you, this does not mean that they do not take from another shop where they have been known for a long time.

From an interview with the director of a fruit and vegetable store, Sergei Belanovsky, 1984

In general, to summarize: the mass "implantations" and repressions of 1982–1984 did little to change the system of Moscow trade. Unless the participants in illegal operations began to act more cautiously, and the circulation of valuables in the "system" slowed down.

A year after Sergei Belanovsky took the interview cited above, Ambartsumyan was shot. It was 1987. The law on cooperation was about to be adopted. Trade was about to be done, and "speculation" was to be turned into a legal activity. Something had to be done about this, the Soviet state trade was in a state of collapse. People would have been happy to steal, but there was nothing to steal. It was necessary to change something. It was in the air.

7.

More than twenty years have passed since then. The bigwigs of that, the Soviet trading business for a very rare use switch - I honestly don't even remember

I don't care about anyone - they couldn't build something big, serious, with a turnover of billions of dollars in the 90s. Although, it would seem ... That's what he says about his colleagues, management is average and slightly above the level of Veteran trade, the interlocutor of Sergei Belanovsky:

... These are strong people. They know what they are playing. They are under great real responsibility. Is it in the ministries or millions can be "rotten" at enterprises, and no one will answer for it. And in the store for 1000 rubles "burnt out" - and in prison. These people are strong psychologically. They know people and know how to work with them. If you give them certain opportunities, they would show themselves from the best side. It is, of course, a dream. Now the most prominent organizers of our trade are those who are in prison. What

they call us a scam in trade - this is not a scam quality. These are ridiculous rules of the game, from which they can seriously those who play it will suffer...

From an interview with the director of a fruit and vegetable store, Sergei Belanovsky, 1984

Would they like to do their own thing? Earn money with your own wits, resourcefulness, creativity, the ability to build schemes? But not theft, rat-keeping? Yes, of course: "... everyone would like to have their own" business ". If given the opportunity to organize it properly, what normal person would refuse it? They would put their hearts into it."

Maybe this director was a hoax. In the end, a man with a voice recorder came to him, asking strange questions. Why should he tell him

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only the truth? But he probably really thought so. However, between mother" and "to do" - we a chasm. Perhaps many Soviet directors ra thought to go into private business. But really completely different people could turn around.

The bigwigs of the Soviet trading business for a very rare except build something big, serious in billions of dollars so in the 90s and couldn't.

Sergei Galitsky, who built the Magnit trading network from scratch, took up trading operations in the early 90s, one might say, by accident. Yevgeny Chich Varkin, who opened more than 5,000 stores under the Euroset brand, also had nothing to do with Soviet trade. Just as Lev Khasis, the man who built the Perekrestok trading network, did not have it either. Something did not allow the "monsters" of that still Soviet temper to succeed in the years when the main thing was not to deftly shove a bribe on the head of the vegetable base, but to understand what the people really need and how best to sell it to them.

And now it turns out that, after all, giving a bribe is becoming a more important art than the ability to trade and feel your buyer, the market. The law on trade, which was discussed above, in fact leaves at the mercy of officials the question of where

open stores, and where not. Which trading price is justified, and which one is too high. Dozens, if not hundreds of more and more new ways to "suck", to control.

Some people thought that minced meat could not be turned back. That, having released trade to freedom and having received as a result

Trade Law

actually
gives away
officials

the question is where
worth discovering
the shops. Which
trade margin
justified
and what -
overpriced.

If the store shelves are full and the demand of the population is satisfied, the state will not dare to bridle it again. For example, Yevgeny Chichvarkin thought so, trying to prove to the employees of the authorities who "protected" the illegal import of telephone handsets that he could live without them.

He defiantly ignored the hints of people from the Department "K" of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who

repeatedly offered him to integrate into the system.

Chichvarkin wanted to pay money only to those whom he himself wanted. And upstairs, the "roof" did not want to pay at all. It didn't work out. The state machine played against business. Numerous criminal cases were initiated against Chichvarkin and his employees. Euroset was subjected to inspections. The result - Chichvarkin in London. Euroset changed owners.

Someone will say - well, because these are ordinary business showdowns in the style of the 2000s. The competition of corrupt security officials (or better, the business of security officials), the struggle of "roofs" and political emigration to London in order to solve exclusively economic problems. Perhaps there is some truth in this. But in style, in perceptible "smell", this is too much reminiscent of undercover fuss in the "soviet" trade of the 70s and early 80s. viscous environment. Dirty people making money from their positions. System of clients and "trusted counterparties". And most importantly, the general feeling - it's impossible! It doesn't work. There will soon be nothing to steal. And tightening the nuts only exacerbates the effect.

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Lifestyle

But I digress again. Let us return to the Soviet entrepreneurs. What kind of people were they? How did you live? What did you hope for, what did you believe in?

Yes, they were different. As usual, it happens. Among them were greedy, stingy. Were generous. They were reckless. Were careful. Different. But there was something that united them all.

1.

Konstantin Simes, the father of the famous American Sovietologist Dmitry Simes, who emigrated from the USSR in 1977, was a well-known lawyer in Moscow before his departure. In this capacity, he participated in major trials against the guilds. After emigrating, he published several works on how underground enterprises function in the USSR and what is the way of life.

their owners.

What is described below is based on the materials of the case involving Saism, considered by the Moscow City Court in 1964. The defendants are a group of underground businessmen. From the testimony of witnesses and the materials of the prosecution, a quite characteristic picture of the lifestyle of the bigwigs of the Soviet business of that period is formed.

Center of Moscow. Running utilities. Eleven rooms, eight families. About twenty people. All have one kitchen, one bathroom and one toilet. Ordinary Soviet people—workers, doctors, engineers. The spacious, albeit neglected, kitchen has eight tables, two gas stoves, always occupied in the morning and evening, when the inhabitants of the communal kitchen prepare breakfast and supper. There seemed to be no secrets. Everyone knows everything. Who eats what and who buys what.

Two rooms are occupied by a Jewish family. The husband is a modest master adjuster in a hosiery shop. The family does not seem to live in poverty, but lives without much income. At least in food - no frills. In the mornings - cheesecakes from the cheapest cottage cheese for 26 kopecks. In the evening - cutlets for six kopecks apiece from local cuisine. Potatoes, macaroons. Sometimes - soup in meat broth, boiled

on beef moss.

But what the neighbors don't know is that late but in the evening, when everyone is asleep, this cheap cooking is thrown into the garbage can or flushed down the toilet. And what they don't know for sure is that in the back, the smallest of the two rooms that the hosiery worker's family occupied, a very different kind of food was being prepared on a small electric stove. Here, real delicacies were used, which were not available to ordinary mortals. The refrigerator in a small room was usually stuffed to the brim with foodstuffs that were simply not to be found in Moscow at the time—expensive servalat, ham, good cuts, fruit, caviar, red fish, and so on.

A comical detail - when the family sat down to dinner, food from both "parties" was put on the table. In the service

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tea, if one of the neighbors knocked on the door, and it would be too impolite to expose the visitor, the "real" food was taken out to the back room. All this came to light when the humble "fixer" was arrested and his

neighbors had to testify to investigators.

Only then did it become clear that this man, forever dressed in an old coat and worn-out shoes, was in fact, an underground millionaire, the owner of a workshop at the same factory where he was listed as a serviceman. And his monthly income was an order of magnitude higher than the total annual earnings of all the other inhabitants of the communal apartment. But where to put all this money?

2.

Soviet entrepreneurs could not invest their money in expanding production. They could not noticeably increase the scale of their workshop and the turnover of their trading scheme. On the one hand, the growth in the scale of business inevitably increased the likelihood of reprisals from the authorities. On the other hand, in order to increase sales volumes, it was not enough just to invest in the purchase of new equipment or increase working capital. In the end, it all came down to people. It was necessary to find ways to obtain raw materials, to agree on distribution channels. That is, we needed rather the skills of personal persuasion, the correct building of relationships with people. Not money per se.

You say - you can pay big bribes? But no matter how paradoxical it may seem at first glance, the value of an offering is not always determined by its size. It is important how and under what circumstances

given money. Yes, it may not be money at all, but not some kind of service or favor. So the cost of bribes was not the item of expenditure that could devour all the income from the business. As Simes writes, judging by the materials of cases in which he was directly involved as a lawyer, Soviet businessmen spent from 15 to 20% of their income on bribes.

Soviet

entrepreneurs are not
could invest
own funds
in extension
production. Height
business scale
inevitably increased
likelihood of reprisals
from the side of the authorities.

So on hand
shop workers, speculators,
pushers and other participants
in non-state economic activity
left

There were large sums in
Soviet times. But what could
they spend it on? Luxuries?
Possible

the costs of this kind of spending in the
Soviet Union were harsh

ko are limited, even for those

people who could confirm their income with legal sources. What could, say, a popular actor who really had a lot of legal money afford? Buy a four-room cooperative apartment - 15,000 rubles. Car "Volga" - another 10,000 rubles. Build a cottage according to an individual project of an Estonian designer and furnish it with custom-made furniture? Well, let's say 150,000 rubles.

Perhaps this is all that theoretically the most active participants in the "second" economy of the USSR could afford. I mean, they had that kind of money. However, what about the confirmation of their legality? Every purchase

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ka, every major waste of money was made by the majority of underground Soviet millionaires with an eye over their shoulder. How is the OBHSS, not following? And it doesn't matter whether it was a dinner at an expensive restaurant or buying a fur coat for his wife.

So the dominant model of behavior of Soviet businessmen was saving what they earned. Of course, the above example with a family preparing suppers and lunches from the cheapest products for the sake of conspiracy is a completely out of the ordinary case. Moreover, the described events

dominant
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earned.

These events took place in the midst of Khrushchev's repressions, when large-scale "imprisonments" and "execution" sentences handed down by the courts forced entrepreneurs to behave as discreetly as possible. But he reflects the general trend correctly.

And it consisted in the fact that most of the underground millionaires tried to provide their families with a decent and much higher than average standard of living, but at the same time not stand out much from the general mass. Although, of course, this "not standing out too much" looked different in different places. It is one thing in Moscow or Odessa, and quite another in Georgia.

3.

In the 70s, the Supreme Court of the Georgian SSR sentenced a certain Gogliadze to 20 years in prison, who ran several tailoring shops. So, he quite legally owned two luxurious houses -

in Tbilisi and in Tsknet, the local equivalent of the modern Moscow Rublyovka. Both houses were furnished with exquisite antique furniture obtained through illegal antique dealers and buyers in Moscow and Leningrad. A real wine cellar (marani) was equipped in the courtyard with *qvevri* buried in the ground - giant clay jugs filled with wine. During the search, about 45,000 rubles were confiscated from Goglidze, not counting his wife's jewelry. As Goglidze later explained during interrogations, it was money for everyday expenses - they simply lay in a conspicuous place.

Gogliadze was not afraid of the UBKhSS and other inspectors - he paid monthly "fees" to the top of the local regulatory bodies. In the gardens of his houses almost constantly there were laid tables for friendly feasts, where dozens of guests were invited. A hired orchestra played, the old people sang traditional Georgian songs. Wine from the horns, flowery toasts and toasts flowed like a river. Immediately in the garden, lambs were slaughtered and barbecued.

The luxurious lifestyle and conspicuous consumption of Gogliadze were not unique to Soviet Georgia. Here, as in neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia, the screws were far from being tightened as tightly as in the territory of the Soviet Union beyond the Caucasus range.

Of course, some people in Moscow led a similar lifestyle. The same Constantine Simes writes about one of his clients that during a search they found several dozen expensive suits. His wife, a Bolshoi ballerina, had numerous expensive jewelry confiscated. The couple regularly visited the most

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expensive Moscow restaurants, and this could not but attract the attention of the OBKhSS. For a long time, by paying solid donations to the fighters against the theft of socialist property, Simes' client managed to remain at large and turn his business around, but the result was inevitable - arrest.

Most wealthy people in Moscow, Ukraine or the Baltic republics assessed the situation more pragmatically, and did not allow themselves to lead a "Georgian" way of life. At least in the 60s and 70s.

They carried out complex operations to exchange rooms in communal apartments in order to eventually receive (but by no means buy suddenly and immediately) one large apartment. Of course, they built a fashionable dacha, but they registered it in the name of relatives. Having used their capabilities from the field of "you to me - I to you", they issued a ticket, let's say, to the Black Sea resorts of Bulgaria, and there they could finally afford to dress decently and, on the whole, behave in accordance with real incomes.

In order to truly "break away", Soviet millionaires had to get out of their usual environment. They say that during the tour of Alla Pugacheva in Armenia, several shop workers who came to the concert of the star organized a banquet in her honor. And to impress, they brewed coffee for the singer, using 100-ruble bills as fuel. Whether there was such a case or not is difficult to say. But the fact remains that the owners of large fortunes in Soviet times could lead a truly luxurious lifestyle only away from their places of permanent residence and outside the environment of ordinary communication.

carry on really
luxurious
Lifestyle
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communication.

Many rich people spent money on works of art, since the country was flooded with trophies brought after the war from Germany and Manchuria. A full set of gold teeth is another way to profitably invest the money you earn. Although, of course, there were more original UV treatments. In the 70s of the last century in Alma-Ata, after the arrest of one of the local large guild workers, on the top floor of his three-story private house, a standing observatory with a powerful Zeiss telescope was discovered. Officially, it was issued for the Republican Planetarium, but as a result of a couple of combinations, it ended up at the disposal of a wealthy amateur astronomer who earned money by tailoring.

In one of the issues of the Krokodil magazine of that time, a caricature was published about Mercedes, which dreams at night that the steering wheel, upholstery, badge with a three-pointed star have been removed from it, and it has turned into "For the Porozhets" - just so as not to stick out. And it was a very important move.

4.

In his memoirs, retired Major General Ivan Skorodelov gives a typical example. He had a certain Zu Sev in development for a long time, director of the wholesale base of the Mikoyanovsky meat-packing plant

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nata. "Sitting" on the limits, he distributed the supply of meat to processing industries and shops. Tender veal tenderloin! Who remembers the beginning of the 80s - a greater deficit cannot be found. But the main thing is that on sorting (the sale of cheap types of meat at the price of more expensive ones), the heads and sellers of the meat departments of the stores "raised" a lot of money. To get a job in the meat department then meant to securely arrange your life.

And Zusev played a key role in this business. Meat passed through it. And it was in his power to give someone more, and someone less. For bribes - sometimes in money, and more often in kind (smoked sausages, necks, meat rolls and other delicacies), Zusev shipped over-limit funds to the right people. Those who did not pay anything got worse meat and strictly according to the limit. The scheme is typical for the Soviet food industry. However, the head of the base of the Mikoyan meat-packing plant developed an original scheme for converting the resulting sausage into cash. He sold the meat products he got in one of the stores in the Moscow region, next to his outside the city house. The store manager and salespeople were,

naturally, in proportion.

Skorodelov's department uncovered this scheme. Under a plausible pretext, documents were seized from the store through which Zusev sold his goods for verification. We checked - it turned out that no sausages and meat delicacies were supplied to the store. But local residents during interrogations testified that for some time now their village shop has turned into a real cornucopia, where everything was. The store is closed

whether for inventory and revision. They carried out an inspection and found in the back rooms a large batch of meat delicacies, which had just been brought in by Zusev. At the same time, a shortage of 12,000 rubles was discovered, which the store director handed over to Zusev for goods.

This whole story is curious, however, to others. Namely, the style of consumption of the "meat" businessman. Zusev received a fairly large salary by Soviet standards. His wife dressed in the same privileged stores as the wives of high-ranking officials. She used an atelier that served members of the Politburo and their wives, with many of whom she maintained friendly relations.

However, he did not spend the money that Zusev received from the sale of "his" goods. With his income, he could buy a dozen Zhiguli per month. But he took the minimum for himself and for the family, only bought gold and jewelry for them, and then hid them in hiding places. Skorodelov cites the story that struck him most of all in the case of the underground "meat king".

Zusev (he turned 60 on the eve of his arrest) had a mistress, a beautiful student Ksyusha, eighteen years old. For each visit, the director of the base paid her 10 rubles. The meetings took place in the garage. As General Skorodelov, who visited the place, writes in disgust, in "unsanitary conditions." Zusev brought his "love" to the place of rendezvous in the trunk of his personal Volga. Exported in the same way. So that no one could see, the director said later during interrogation. Then he landed on the road about three hundred meters from the garages. From there, Ksyusha got to the house on the chaise longue. For all the time of acquaintance, a wealthy lover did not

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gave her a single gift, did not take her to a restaurant. "It was just a monster in the guise of a director of a wholesale depot!" exclaims Skorodelov, summing up this story in his memoirs.

But a monster or not, but during interrogations Zusev, who was clearly frightened by the prospect of spending the rest of his days behind bars, brought down on the investigators a stream of information about who, when, what and under what conditions he took from him at the base. This list included both big people from the Moscow city committee and high ranks from the metropolitan police. Judging by the abundance of details and details, Zu Sev did not lie. "Of course, Zusev wanted to intimidate us with his connections, but nothing came of it: with all the desire of the patrons, it was impossible to destroy the evidence base of his crime," sums up Skorodelov. Zusev was indeed given a long sentence. However, most of the values accumulated by him

you didn't succeed.

5.

Conversion into gold, chervonets of royal coinage, jewelry, jewelry - there was no other way for Soviet rubles earned by shady businessmen. During searches in hiding places, they found a kilo

grams, sometimes - tens of kilograms of precious metals.

"Shakerman, why such accumulations?" - the investigator asked the guild worker arrested in Moscow in the early 1960s, one of the owners of the underground knitwear workshop organized at the neurological psychiatric dispensary. About 10 kilograms of gold and silver were found in Shakerman's caches. He replied:

"Just in case. Of course, in order to live well and not need anything. This is the main thing. Secondly, maybe we could go abroad and put these values into circulation there. For example, to engage in trade. In a word, do business.

The window to the world opened in the 1970s, when Jewish emigration became possible. Permission to leave was given at the request of relatives living in Israel. Naturally, the "invitation" had its price, and not everyone could pull it off. In addition, the expression "wife as a means of transportation" entered the lexicon of Soviet citizens after fictitious marriages with Jewish women became quite

widespread in order to organize an exit.

Converting into gold,
royal chervonets
coinage, jewelry, ornaments -
other
the paths of the Soviet
rubles earned by the shadow
there were no businessmen.

Opportunities opened
took advantage of

many of the "serious people"
who have amassed a serious
fortune. Naturally, no one
would give you to bring gold

from the USSR. Therefore, family savings were converted into jewelry. From a formal point of view, there were no restrictions on the amount of exported, as they say, on oneself, gold. "Why can't a woman wear a five-carat diamond ring on each finger? This is from my grandmother. We have participated in such trips. Well, what could we do - let them leave. We all knew who was leaving," recalls Skorodelov.

In addition to expensive jewelry, people leaving the USSR hunted for antique furniture and icons. The family was allowed to take two containers of things with them. Their

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they tried to fill them with as much as possible the most valuable property in the West - antique furniture, icons, paintings. All those that could be liquid abroad. Naturally, most of the emigrants remained in transit camps in Vienna or Rome, and from there they went to the USA or European countries.

What else? The sign of the era is currency checks, which could be used to buy anything in the Beryozka chain of stores. Checks were used to pay Soviet citizens who worked abroad. Returning to their homeland, those checks were not redeemed - everything was already there, but they were sold for money. Their secondary market was formed.

Go ahead. The black market for winning lottery tickets - remember the character in the Diamond Hand who won the Moskvich lottery?! So, this is not a joke. Imported Levi Strauss and Wrangler

jeans, which were considered a sign of belonging to the wealthy segments of the population. Canned beer. The car "VAZ 2106" - colloquially "six", the most prestigious of the cars theoretically available to private individuals. Household appliances - imported refrigerator and - flashy luxury! - video recorder.

Those 5-6% are socially active citizens capable of earning money even under conditions state system punishing criminal persecution for privacy entrepreneurship, lived without spiking.

That's probably all. Those 5–6% of socially active citizens who are capable of earning money and manage to do so even under the conditions of the state system

The system punishing private entrepreneurship with criminal prosecution lived without a fuss. Especially compared to today. And if you remember under what conditions and at what cost this wealth was obtained ... The need to lie, dodge, just give bribes in order to do business. It is not surprising that the next generation of entrepreneurs, people who made their big money in the 90s, fell headlong into ostentatious, disgustingly tasteless, but very expensive consumption. It would be strange, but if it were different.

6.

But what even official propaganda could not take away from Soviet businessmen was activity, perseverance, perseverance and enterprise. They spent their money differently. And they were different people - someone evoked sympathy, someone disgusted. But they had one thing in common. They could take it on and do the job, build a working process, offer a product that is in demand by the population (allied, partners).

In 1973, the Literary Gazette published forged a series of materials on the activities of brigades of covenants in new buildings in Moscow. The correspondent of *Literaturka* got a job in one of the state improvement offices. After working there for two months, he wrote a report about why private workers work better than government employees. Shabashniks, who upholstered doors with leatherette, scraped the floors, glued wallpaper in the apartments of the new villagers, were naturally called grabbers and businessmen. The author admitted that they certainly work in something

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better than the government office. But the police need to deal with this phenomenon - out of about 14 million rubles that Muscovites spend every year on repairs in new apartments, 10 million are spent by private owners. Disorder!

A couple of months later, the editorial office of Literaturnaya Gazeta received, and, most surprisingly, an anonymous letter from a brigade of covens was published:

... Please note that if we are forbidden to engage in door and qi pecking (as in our time in photography), we will find ourselves new forms of work. In our business, initiative, ingenuity, invention diligence and commercial agility pay off instantly and very generously. Because in the sphere of domestic services and especially in new forms, we, the coven workers, have dominated and will continue to dominate. After all, we do not need to coordinate and carry a thousand pieces of paper for signature in order to drive in an extra nail or change an outdated standard.

*Anonymous letter from a brigade of covenants,
Literaturnaya Gazeta, 1973*

It is clear that Literaturka is not a semi-official Pravda. And the publication of the letter of the shabashniks is more of a frond, rather than an acknowledgment of the legality of the private way of life. But the fact itself is characteristic - even in the official Soviet media it is confirmed that the private trader works better, he is enterprising and more flexible than the clumsy profile state structures.

January 31, 1982 in the local newspaper "Soviet Trans-Urals" published an article "The collapse of the company Mark Sherman and Co." The author is Mikhail Zabegay, head of the feuilleton department. Before the trial, of course, as is customary. So, in this article, even though the author is crooked lyatsya, calling me a criminal, but looks through me

respect. As regards the case, its volume... Calling me a businessman and a swindler, he keeps asking: how can a private trader do this, but supply organizations cannot? I am quoting from memory, of course. After all, it's been eight years...

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

And really, how so? He can, but the official planners and purveyors can't. The answer is simple. You have to really live what you do. And if among employees of state institutions, enthusiasm at the workplace was, despite all propaganda efforts, the exception rather than the rule, then the guild worker, the pusher, and the same black marketeer could not earn his money, and even more money, without investing to the cause with all his energy and business acumen. They had to really work, and not serve out the working day in the office.

Yan Rokotov, who was shot in 1962 on charges of illegal gold and foreign exchange transactions, testified during interrogation by the investigator:

- Tired of currency transactions and feeling that my nerves were starting to fail, I decided to take a break. Having obtained a voucher for 24 days to the sanatorium, I went to the Crimea, to the Black Sea. After staying there for a week, I ran away. Could not resist. You lie on the beach, and the thought drills in your head: there, in Moscow, my competitors are doing business, earning big money, and here you are lying on the sand, sunbathing. A week later I arrived in Moscow and went about my business.

Others have said the same. Roifman, Shakerman's partner in the knitting shop at the psychiatric dispensary:

- It was necessary to keep in mind dozens of operations for the sale of products, the acquisition of raw materials, remember everything

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settlements with accomplices ... At the same time, one had to think in order not to get caught. There is no time for books and newspapers ...

"The spirit of acquisitiveness and profit filled all their vital interests" – this is how the obsession of Soviet entrepreneurs with their business was officially interpreted. They themselves, of course, talked about it in to another.

The Soviet lawyer Konstantin Simes recalls that one of his clients was an elderly arrested guild worker. He was under 70. He was a massive, self-confident man. The owner of several underground factories,

producing household goods and linen. During the searches, valuables worth several million rubles were found on him. The tsekhovik was threatened with spending the rest of his life in prison or even execution. Simes defended him in court and met in Butyrskaya prison, where he was kept during the investigation.

Simes once asked:

- Abram Isakovich, why didn't you retire at least ten years ago? Continued to do it all, despite the risk? After all, what you have already earned would be enough for you and your children, even if you lived for a hundred years?

"You really don't understand?" Do you really think I needed money?! I needed to live. And my life was my business!

If among employees government agencies enthusiasm was at work more the exception than the rule, then the guild, the pusher, yes the same farce could not make money without investing put all your energy into it and business acumen.

CHAPTER XI

What happened to them?

But where do they all go? It would seem that hundreds of thousands of grasping, enterprising people. Those with experience in doing business, albeit in a semi-legal, but quite a market economy. Tsekhoviki, large underground bigwigs... People similar to Krymov performed by Stanislav Govorukhin, the main negative hero of the cult "Assy" in the late 80s. Large

money.

It seemed that in the 1990s the broadest prospects opened before them. In theory, it was they, with their life experience and business acumen, who were to become the pioneers of the new private Russian economy. Having at the start decent money by Soviet standards, succeed in privatization, build a business empire with a billion dollar capitalization. Finally, to form the backbone of a new class of owners - to become owners of shops, small enterprises, and service infrastructure.

They became. But not all. Many entrepreneurs of the "Soviet" type, due to the specifics of the business they were engaged in before the reforms of the 1990s, could not, as they say, integrate into the market. Others, on the contrary, have adapted to modern conditions. However, the underground and semi-criminal past

not allowed to rise high. Many did not aspire to resounding success at all.

But some people managed to achieve really stunning results. For example, the Cherny brothers, guild workers from Tashkent. To be fair, they could be called

real makers of billionaires. At least a few of the richest people in modern Russia started out as Cherny's henchmen. True, the owners of billions of dollars themselves prefer to talk about it today
don't remember.

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1.

His name is, for example, Sergey. When I met him in February 2009, he was 58. We sat talking for four hours. He managed to tell a lot and frankly about what he was imprisoned for, how he got free, how he built his business. He let me write whatever I want out of it. But he asked for one favor - not to give his real name and surname. Not really
he was ashamed of the past and felt that what he had done was wrong. He, as he said, does not want whispers behind his back and "understanding" looks.

So, let his name be Sergey. He received his first term in 1972 - five years for operations with gold and foreign exchange values. By that time, he quite imagined what was happening, and how the business works in

THE USSR. Sergei recalls that he was in Batumi with his parents in the summer. I went somewhere on a trolleybus. Gave the driver 20 kopecks for a ticket that cost a nickel. Waiting for change. Instead of surrender, I received - "Get out of here!" Later, the elders explained - the person paid for his place, and he needs to work off the money.

By his twenties, Sergei, a student at the Moscow Aviation Institute, was already engaged in fartsovka, "worked" with foreigners, bought gold on occasion, in order to "push" it to underground dentists later. One day a friend approached him and said that a grandfather he knew wanted to buy gold. It seems to be like teeth is going to do. Sergei gave a pair of gold royal chervonets. The two went to the meeting. A friend had to talk to a potential buyer. And Sergei - to watch this from the side.

It seems that everything went fine, they talked with the grandfather, they parted ways. But a friend was impatient to call someone. He approached Sergei and asked him for a coin. So the two of them were "copied" - the grandfather was a dummy, the OBE guards followed the meeting. Both dealers were arrested. But after serving his five years, Sergei was released, as they say, with a profession in his hands.

He served time in one of the camps of the Komi ASSR. The zone was engaged in logging. Sergei, a smart man and savvy in economic matters, by the end of his term of imprisonment had made close acquaintance with the deputy head of the colony for economic issues. And he had his own business. Or rather, he was sitting on the "scheme".

The zone is, consider, a whole sawmill with its own logging site, sawmill and giant open warehouses with products stacked in piles ready for shipment. And, like at any Soviet logging enterprise, there were real mounds of waste here.

Chapter XI. **What happened to them?**

Substandard and simply unaccounted for leftovers went there. What are the leftovers, you ask? Yes, very simple. Let's take a specific example, at least with a "tare plate".

This was the name given to thin wooden planks half a meter long, from which boxes were knocked together - one of the most common types of packaging in the USSR. According to the standards, the gap between the slats was supposed to be one centimeter. In reality, it could be two or three centimeters. Of course, the men who knocked together the boxes left wide gaps with the knowledge and direct instructions of the authorities. There was a specific economy of this very tare plate.

Having saved money, the suppliers of fruit and vegetable bases, where they made containers, negotiated with loggers to supply them with smaller boards, but more boards or round timber. After all, you don't use this tare board for anything except for knocking together boxes. And a board, a bar, and just a round timber could be sold at a profit - those who wished stood in line. The result was a long barter chain.

But at the very beginning, extra waste arose - after all, in order to get one cubic meter of a plank, it was necessary to dissolve 3 cubic meters of wood. And for one cubic meter of a fifty-fifty board, it took only 1.5 cubic meters of round timber. Once the land went to the dumps. For the most part, they simply rotted, and only when the dumps acquired completely cyclopean dimensions, and a reasonable question could not but arise - there was so much waste from there - they were burned.

However, some of the more greedy, or, so it can also be said, enterprising, did not burn the waste, but sold it to the left. These enterprising people included people from the administration of the zone where
Sergey. By the end of his term, he himself also became one

of the notable participants in the scheme. He kept records of delivered "left" goods. He organized work at the "forest exchange" - the site where the forest was stored. Well, and so on.

2.

Freed, he continued the "forest business". Sergei traveled around the collective farms of Ukraine, Moldavia, and southern Russia and offered over-limit deliveries of timber. Why collective farms? They were allowed to sell food in the markets and simply from cars. Therefore, there was unrecorded cash.

For this cash, Sergei drew up documents for the supply of timber from the brigades of lumberjacks allegedly working in Komi. Of course, there were no brigades - the timber was supplied at the expense of the very remnants that otherwise would have simply been burned. And the loggers' passports, with which Sergei came to the heads of the collective farms, were fake, they were made by the prisoners on the order of the colony administration.

The scheme functioned properly for about five years. In addition to the forest, Sergei was engaged in some other business. Married, had two children. Was listed at some nondescript job. He estimates his then income at 700-1000 rubles a month. With this money, he bought a three-room cooperative apartment in Moscow on Usievich Street. "Zhiguli" of the third model ("penny" with a "station wagon" body), built a dacha. I could go to the most expensive Moscow restaurants. Using currency checks obtained through acquaintances, he dressed his family in Berezhki. In other words, he led the life of a quite typical representative of the Soviet business stratum.

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However, in 1983 the "shop" was closed. As it usually happened, everything was revealed by accident. One of the prisoners, involved in the illegal supply of timber from the zone, lost at cards. There was nothing to pay, and he ran for protection to the operational department of the colony. Operas existed somewhat apart from other administrations - they were really engaged in investigations, conducted interrogations of convicts, checked the requests that came to them, so that they were not devoted to forest affairs, which were handled by the economic department. The unsuccessful player was accepted, entered into a position, you carefully listened. And he, inflating his own worth, told about the machinations going on right here in the colony.

Like, something is wrong with the cars. According to the documents, 50 wagons are to be sent for repairs. But in fact, 45 leaves. The rest are loaded with timber and sent somewhere. The information was taken into account. Already in the next night, an ambush was set up in the warehouse. The very first illegal shipment was discovered. Everyone who was on the spot was detained. The interrogations began. As a result, the investigators managed to unwind a single point up to the deputy head of the colony. But he died in jail. And the investigation went no further.

But Sergei turned out to be one of the main figures. He was charged with embezzlement of property on an especially large scale. In total, it was about 12 cars and proven damage to the state in 112,000 rubles. He, of course, claimed that he was only drawing up papers with collective farms. And the brigades, he was told, were real. He did not know about the real source of timber supplies. And about the fact that the passports with which he came to the collective farms were false, too

was not aware. But the court did not take all this into account. The sentence is 13 years in prison. He was released ahead of schedule - in 1993, according to a letter from the Supreme Court.

It was decided to review his sentence in connection with a change in the law. Arriving in Moscow, the former prisoner saw a completely different life. Both the country and the people around us were different.

3.

About his 12 years spent in the zone, Sergei recalls without much enthusiasm. However, he does not tell heartbreaking stories either. "Hard. First of all, morally. You live like in a pigsty. There are 15 people in the room. Everyone smokes shag, even hang an ax. By evening, the head is splitting. They immediately spit, vomit right on the floor," he says. Who were his neighbors? Mostly convicted for petty theft and household goods. Someone stole a bag of crackers from a neighbor in the village. They gave me a couple of years. Someone drunk cut a drinking buddy - they gave a "five". What can you talk about with people who, in all seriousness, retell the story of a peasant who trained a mouse to bring him gold coins? You just get dumber," says Sergey.

The authorities in the zone were, according to him, entirely "black", from the Caucasus. They didn't particularly find fault with him himself - one of his articles was "for gold", and this could turn out to be useful later, at large. They tried to do business with him. But for the second "walk" he swore to participate in "operations". Although, of course, there were some conflicts. Sergei remembered a skirmish with one semi-criminal. He tried to assert himself

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due to planted huckster. The case, however, turned out to be a light scuffle.

When there is a column of convicts, the most "respected" ones are in the front ranks. They see where there is a puddle or mud ahead, they can bypass or step over them. Those who come behind are forced to knead the dirt. Sergey, according to him, walked in the first line.

Otherness and at will people do not forgive. But here it is even more unbearable. From oppression, people hate each other. From poverty, from stuffiness. Without the rules of life, the relations of prisoners among themselves turn into natural selection.

But I adjusted my relations with the zone. I do not need to grimace and look like someone. They accepted me for who I am and they call me simply - "Mikhail", without a nickname and chase, like are expressed here.

One has only to step over the threshold - the prison sees who and what you are. You need to know life and be confident in it. Jail respects the strong.

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman

Life skills in the zone came in handy when Sergei was released. The apartment was no longer there - his wife sold it and left for Israel. With only one certificate issued upon release, no one needed him in Moscow.

I had to huddle in the apartment of an old friend. Then, nevertheless, I managed to knock out a room in a communal apartment in the housing office. With \$300 borrowed, I bought a used "nine", began to taxi. At the Luzhniki, in a baited place where they didn't let strangers "bomb", got into a skirmish with the locals. He broke the arm of one of the brothers with a tire iron, who forbade taking passengers. Boyal-

Xia that in the cops they will cling to two past convictions, and the story will not end well. But it passed.

Earned money. I started renting an apartment. Then, through acquaintances, he got a job in an office that sold batteries. There he quickly rose to the position of head of the sales department. He sat there for a while, and then leaned on free bread. Trades all the same batteries. It imports, clears customs, stuffs it to regional dealers. Now the turnover of his company is about \$10 million a year. Man fifteen employees. The office is in the gray building of the old institute next to the Moscow Ring Road.

When I entered the office, Sergei was sitting at his computer, calculating something, studying stock quotes on the MICEX website. It was, remember, in February 2009. At that time, many who bought stocks "at the bottom", immediately after the dramatic fall of the markets in August-September 2008, were able to make good money.

Especially those who bought the papers of Sberbank. Among the blue chips, Sberbank shares showed the most vigorous recovery dynamics. Sergei, when I went to see him, was in a good mood. Unless he whistled for joy. I have earned about \$50,000 from Sberbank since New Year," he reported half an hour later, when they started talking. For him, "business" is still, as in the 70s, casinos, risk, the feeling that you can play where you cannot win by definition.

But when it comes to batteries, Sergei noticeably gets bored. Listen to him, things were going sour. Construction companies a year ago, before the crisis - the main buyer, now "blown away". Others were doing poorly as well. While we were talking, Sergei received a couple of calls from Yekaterinburg. Once one of his employees, and the other - it seems, the investigator. I asked what

case? It turned out that one of the dealers had disappeared. Now they are looking for either money or goods given to him for sale. We have already talked to my wife and mother. They don't seem to know where the person has gone. I asked: who said something, local brothers? Sergei smiled wryly. He replied that he tried not to deal with bandits either in the 90s or now. Works with the cops. So it turns out more reliable.

4.

Well, that's the whole story. Could Sergei really become a rich and powerful man in the new Russia? Soberly looking at things - hardly.

He spent the end of the 80s in a colony. Released in 93. While he was in prison, a layer of "new" entrepreneurs was forming in the seething cauldron of Soviet society. Those who will be fantastically rich in the 90s. Who were they? For the most part active "players" of the system. For example, former Komsomol members who had connections and access to information. It was they who organized the first "scientific and technical centers" and other self-supporting "slaps" at large enterprises, which quickly turned into channels for cashing out and withdrawing huge funds from state enterprises at that time. This money was invested in the import of computers, clothing, food. The first post-Soviet fortunes were made on them.

The same people managed to infiltrate power through chains of acquaintances. Get access to information and decision-making mechanisms. And a little later - a real opportunity to snip off your "piece of the pie" during privatization. A brilliant example of this is Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Today he is the main political

"inmate" of the country. And in the 90s - a cynical "Komsomol member", a rogue, a businessman who is not shy about means. Is it possible to imagine in his place a man with two convictions behind him, a marginal who has just returned from camp? As a rare exception to the rule, probably yes. However, the conversion of former economic prisoners into successful privatizers has not become a mass phenomenon. Sergey didn't succeed either.

This is on the one hand. On the other hand, Soviet entrepreneurs were very specific entrepreneurs. In order to earn, it was necessary to steal, well, or "get it." It doesn't matter - trade, production of goods, services for the population - there were no legal ways. Raw materials, components, premises, energy, labor - none of this could be bought. Accordingly, the entrepreneurial activity of Soviet citizens was aimed at "getting" it. And then sell it in an equally illegal way.

Naturally, even given the pervasive corruption, such schemes could only exist on a relatively small scale. In addition, they were not subject to replication. The "Soviet" entrepreneur, unlike his Western counterparts, who operated in conditions of transparent, open markets with clear rules of the game, could not fine-tune the business process and then only deal with their scaling.

Converting ex
economic
prisoners in successful
privatizers
mass phenomenon
did not.

No, he had to act "manually",
literally do everything himself.
After all, the probability of failure
grew in proportion to the number
of people involved in the
transactions.

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And what is the conclusion? Yes, very simple - these people were not ready for how things would turn out after the collapse of the state, which had pursued them decades before. That it will be necessary to act in conditions of rather tough competition. To resolve issues not for a bribe, but still, in most cases, by offering the market a better product. They were, after all, part of the system. Let it be semi-, or even completely illegal, but part of the system that existed in the USSR. And with the collapse of the Soviet system, the opportunity to do "business" disappeared for many of them. I'll give you an example.

There is a known case, says Leon Kosals, a professor at the Higher School of Economics - a man worked as a driver, drove vodka from the factory to Beryozka. By agreement with the person who released the products from the factory, he took a dozen of "his" boxes into each car. And all this was sold in "Beryozka" for currency and checks. The scheme began to work in the mid-80s, and by the beginning of perestroika, the resourceful driver had about \$1,000,000 in his stash. He had everything - an apartment on Prospekt Mira, a car, an imported TV and VCR. But did he become a millionaire? No, Kosals says. This man invested most of his capital in MMM. And lost everything.

Sergei, the owner of the "battery" business, recalls his friend, who worked as a train conductor "Moscow-Berlin". Thirty years ago, it was not even necessary to explain what this could mean! Now this is an empty phrase. How do you say? Train conductor? Ha! But in the early 80s, a person who regularly traveled abroad, even if it was the GDR, could reasonably believe that life was a success. Bringing (quite legally!) a couple of high-quality GDR things (jackets, raincoats, suits, shoes, etc.) for

times, and by reselling them here, the income could be many times higher than the national average.

This is exactly how things were with an acquaintance of Sergei - a cooperative apartment, a dacha, a car, his wife does not work. However, when the borders were opened in the early 90s, and the "shuttles" got the opportunity to freely transport everything that used to be a deficit, the conductor's business was drastically blown away.

"People are used to having a 1,000% return [per operation]. Even 100% was not enough for them. At the same time, the deficit disappeared. I had to start all over again. They just dissolved," says Sergey about his former partners and counterparties in that Soviet business. On the other hand, he maintains relations with his friend, who in the early 80s traded in fartsovka, and then emigrated to the United States. He does not think about doing his own thing there. Moreover, he never said in any official document, in any of the interviews, what he did in the USSR. He has a stable, well-paid job driving long-distance flights - interstates - a double-decker bus. Salary is about \$50,000 per year. Enough for life. Soon to retire. And no business.

5.

But let us return to the fate of Soviet entrepreneurs. As soon as their business grew, it was closed. Or one had to somehow integrate into the system, convert one's money into promotion in the party or economic sector. Few succeeded in this. In the vast majority of cases, the reward for business success was a prison, or even execution.

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Nikolai Kovarsky, a businessman from St. Petersburg who has caught up with the last Soviet bigwigs, speaks of another reason why entrepreneurs from the USSR did not find themselves in the first roles in the economy of the "new" Russia. In his opinion, the Andropov repressions still pretty much bled the underground Soviet economy. Many truly iconic figures fell under "heavy" articles and went to the camps. On the other hand, since the 1970s it has become possible to leave the USSR through the line of "Jewish" emigration. Some people took advantage of this in the conditions of tightening the screws in 1982-1984. And absolutely massive, according to Kovarsky, was the departure at the end of the 80s, when the borders actually opened.

Overwhelmingly most cases of reward for business success was a prison and then shooting.

People who lived for decades in fear of sudden arrest, whose well-being hung on an incredibly thin thread of offerings to corrupt officials and security forces, practically did not hesitate when making a decision to leave or stay. Especially those who managed to accumulate really decent fortunes and kept them in gold and other "eternal values". "I remember all those conversations. All the people who were earning money were all in a purely emigrant mood. How many acquaintances I had from among the "senior comrades", almost all of them left," says Kovarsky. Naturally, they did not believe in Gorbachev's perestroika. And as soon as the opportunity arose, they left.

Perhaps Kovarsky is exaggerating, but, according to him, in the early to mid-1980s, an "oxygen-poor layer" formed in the Soviet "second" economy. There was a "generational gap" - as a result of the

doc", and mass travel abroad. And just then the "Komsomol members" arrived in time, young guys from the first cooperatives who knew all the moves and exits. Young growth shaded predecessors. Moreover, the "old cadres" really got used to doing things differently than it was accepted in the early turbulent 90s.

After all, besides the "Komsomol members", other iconic characters of the 90s also appeared. Take, for example, the problem of racketeering and gangster "roofs", which has become one of the most characteristic signs of the formation of the modern Russian private economy. Of course, Soviet entrepreneurs encountered organized crime. The raiders found the apartments of wealthy speculators and guild workers, robbed them, and kidnapped relatives for ransom.

This, for example, was hunted by Vyacheslav Ivankov, the future Yaponchik. He started in the 60s in the then famous gang of Gennady Korkov (Mongol), who managed to put together a group of thirty real scumbags. Often their victims were underground millionaires, guild workers, black marketeers, well-known collectors and trade workers. Korkov's people took them to the forest, sometimes taking their families, hung their wives from trees, tortured them, forced them to dig their own graves. Later, Ivankov put together his own gang, with which he traveled around the Union and did about the same thing. In Sverdlovsk, for example, he raided the apartment of the guild member Aysor Tarlanov and threatened his daughter to hand over several kilograms of jewelry.

However, at the trial, when Ivankov was detained on another matter, Tarlanov renounced any claims whatsoever. It was all right. Both the victims and the attackers knew that there would be no appeals to the police - too much would have to be explained about the origin

stolen items or obviously unearned and outrageously high incomes for the Soviet era of the victims.

But was there a phenomenon systemic "protection" of Soviet shadow entrepreneurs by organized crime? There is no one answer to this question. In some places, probably, it was - for example, in Georgia, where powerful thieves

unity formed in the council

sky period. There is also a legend about an all-Union thieves' "gathering" held in the early 80s, either in Stavropol, or in Odessa, at which the generally accepted rate of taxation of "hucksters" was set at 10 percent (and someone says about 20%) collecting from all their income. And supposedly, on the basis of this norm, relations were built in the future between thieves on the one hand and shop workers and other businessmen on the other.

However, Mark Sherman, for example, in his notes from the zone does not mention any thieves and their roof. In the case of the Baku shopkeeper Ramiz Shabanov, there is not a word about this either. If he paid "fees" to anyone, it was the local cops, other inspectors, and the factory administration. Which is understandable - the Soviet state apparatus worked without failures. Some of its representatives could be corrupted, but as a system, the state repressive machine was effective until the end of the 80s. In any case, no thieves and local bribed punks even came close to the regional police department in terms of resources and opportunities to control the territory.

Soviet
state
device worked
without
fail, state
repressive
the car was
effective
until the end
80s.

A new reality came in the 90s. Organs are disorganized, cadres are scattered, beggarly salaries and a catastrophic drop in the prestige of the service. But there were energetic and violent guys in tracksuits with claims to a part of the income of any business they liked. The police are powerless against them. Protection can only be given by equally energetic, but even more ferocious people. This is how bandit "roofs" appear. For the guild workers and others like them, this was a new reality. Not all of them were able to digest it. The logical outcome in many cases was the transfer of control over the business (if it survived in the new market conditions) into the hands of representatives of the "roof".

What is the conclusion from all of the above? Soviet entrepreneurs were not failures. They really were more enterprising, active and inventive than the average mass of the population of the Union. But, like most of the citizens of the USSR, the breakdown of the system caused disintegration and loss of orientation in their environment. In this sense, the guild workers became the same victim of the era as the numerous Soviet intelligentsia. In modern times, they had to look for a new place under the sun. It didn't work out for everyone. And this is apparently the main reason why the figures of the underground Soviet economy did not clearly constitute the predominant part of the new business class in the post-Soviet

6.

Although some of the former illegal Soviet entrepreneurs managed the almost impossible. From the bottom they rose to the commanding heights of whole

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branches of the Russian economy. First of all, we are talking about the legendary Cherny brothers.

The eldest of them, Mikhail, was born in 1952 in the Ukrainian town of Uman. Soon after that, the family moved to Tashkent, where two other brothers, Lev and David, were born. Then many Jews from the European part of the USSR moved to the Central Asian republics. The morals there were more tolerant, and it was much easier to engage in various private "crafts".

The Blacks lived in a large family - in the same house with Mikhail, his brothers and parents, his paternal grandfather and mother's parents also lived. His father worked at the plant as an energy engineer, his mother worked as an accountant. Their official earnings were meager, something like 200 rubles for two. However, in addition to official work, my father had other earnings - he put together a brigade of covens and took private construction contracts. The eldest of the sons, Mikhail, has been involved in this business since the age of seven.

"Tashkent was quite a "wild" place during my childhood," recalled Mikhail Chernoy. Workers from all over the USSR came to Tashkent to eliminate the consequences of the catastrophic earthquake of 1966. Asocial elements of all stripes have also joined the "big construction site" – from swindlers and swindlers to outright criminals. In this environment, on the city streets, the brothers spent their childhood and youth.

Mikhail, the eldest, was fond of sports since childhood - he went in for boxing, played basketball. He was not accepted into the Komsomol. But on the street he was respected. His first business, he, along with the same strong guys

tami, organized in the city parks of Tashkent - held lotteries. From a distance, everything really looked solid. Balls were placed in a rotating drum, on which numbers were applied. The drum rotated, the balls were taken at random, the winning number was announced.

Formally, the organizer of the lottery seemed to be the local sports society DOSAAF. But in fact, Mikhail Chernoy talked about everything through his acquaintances-athletes - with the directorate of parks, with the district executive committees. They gave permission. The "balls" in the lottery drums were table tennis balls. Winnings were the minimum possible. And most of the money collected, arrange whether they took away for themselves. "Soon we were earning 30,000 rubles a month," Mikhail Chernoy later recalled. Naturally, he paid regular bribes to the police. And also, in his own words, to some people, if necessary, "demonstrated muscles."

Chernoy's lottery drum has been spinning for four years. Then he got a job in one of the republican sports organizations. He had the opportunity, together with sports teams, to move around the entire Union. Chernoy took full advantage of this - he began to carry melons and other gifts of sunny Uzbekistan to the cities of Siberia.

However, after several skirmishes with local bandits in Krasnoyarsk, the business had to be abandoned. Chernoy invested the money he earned in his shop. It was organized at the local excavator plant. There, from the "production waste", or, more simply, illegally mined raw materials, the production of then popular

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Vietnamese slippers in the USSR. Output volumes reached 5,000 pairs per day. Soon clothes, plastic jewelry, tights, carpets were added to the slippers...

"I never hid that in the Soviet era I was one of the most significant figures in the so-called "guild" business," said Lev, the younger brother of Mikhail Cherny, in an interview in the 2000s. In the family business, Mikhail was the "kulaks". Lev, who as a child was seriously ill with polio, and his leg was amputated below the knee, is the "brain" of the family business. When the opportunity to freely conduct export-import operations opened up in 1987, the Blacks did several food deals and made their first million dollars.

Further more. Acquainted with Sam Kislin, a Jew from Odessa who emigrated to the United States in the 1970s, the Blacks began exporting raw materials from the country and, in exchange, importing food and consumer goods. At first, coke was exported (raw material for ferrous metallurgy). To get it, Chernoy built complex barter schemes. He supplied cars to coal mines. The coal exchanged for them was sent to coke plants. There he paid for the processing of coal into coke. The resulting raw materials were sent for export.

A similar scheme was later built by Cherny with aluminum smelters. The Cherny structures supplied them with raw materials. Pay for processing. And then they exported aluminum. The sale of finished products and the purchase of alumina at foreign enterprises were controlled by the partners of the former Tashkent guild workers, British Indians Simon and David Ruben. In state structures, business support is provided

the shaft was Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, with whom Mikhail Chernoy managed to firmly "make friends". All this together - schemes for the purchase of raw materials, their delivery for processing to Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, the sale of the resulting aluminum - was called the TWG Company (Trans World Group).

For a while, in 1991-1993, the TWG was the most powerful oligarchic group in the former USSR. In addition to aluminum, the Cherny brothers took control of the production of copper, coal, coke, and ferrous metals. The monthly profit of TWG hosts was measured in tens of millions of dollars. For those times it was really very, very big money.

Then the empire collapsed. Michael and Leo quarreled. Since 1992, the brothers have been doing business separately. At the same time, information about the connections between Mikhail Cherny and the Russian underworld became public property. The eldest of the Cherny brothers studied at the same school and was friends with Alimzhan Takhtakhunov, better known as Taiwanchik. Later, Mikhail Chernoy called his friend, for example, Anton Malevsky, the leader of the Izmailovo organized criminal group. Numerous articles about the criminal nature of TWG appeared in the newspapers. Real gangster "wars" began around the aluminum smelters, with dozens of dead. Mikhail Cherny was accused of being involved in some of the murders. In 1993, he left Russia, received Israeli citizenship, and has not been to Moscow since.

The business was left to management. Those gradually took over all the levers of enterprise management. Over time, they gained control of the share capital. They became quite independent

nye oligarchs. Oleg Deripaska, who managed Mikhail Cherny's aluminum projects, is today the main owner of Rusal Corporation, the world's largest aluminum producer. Estimated fortune - \$ 16.8 billion.

Vladimir Lisin, who was in charge of the iron and steel industry at TWG, managed to gain control of the Novolipetsk Iron and Steel Works in the mid-1990s. Today, he is Russia's richest entrepreneur, according to Forbes magazine, with an estimated net worth of \$24 billion. Iskander Makhmudov, formerly the most trusted of Mikhail Cherny's managers, now owns Kuzbassrazrezugol, Russia's largest coal mining company. Forbes magazine's net worth is \$9.9 billion.

Neither Mikhail nor Lev Cherny, who stood at the origins of these people's ascent to wealth, can boast of billions of dollars. They are certainly not poor people. Manage hundreds of millions of dollars. But compared to the massive operations of the early 1990s, their current business is nothing more than a small cooperative.

Why did it happen? Why did Chernykh's henchmen manage to secure ownership of the largest Russian enterprises, while their "owners", who at one time "planted" managers to manage these enterprises, did not? There are many specific reasons for this, but if you generalize, the answer is this: they still, as they were, and remained strangers to the Russian establishment.

On the wave of confusion, the collapse of existing ties and the formation of a new system, Blacks, thanks to their talents and luck, were able to "ride the wave". Having agreed, as the shop workers knew how to do, with chi-

newcomers, build large-scale schemes. But as soon as the situation began to stabilize, they had to step back into the background.

Take, for example, Oleg Deripaska. He, of course, also had to communicate with the leaders of the Russian underworld. He was familiar and paid money to the same Anton Malevsky and other authorities. However, unlike Mikhail Cherny, Deripaska was not a fringe from Tashkent. An excellent student from the physics department of Moscow State University, modern, thinking and speaking the same language as the inhabitants of the Kremlin, Deripaska was able to literally enter the inner circle of the first persons of the Russian government - he married the granddaughter of Boris Yeltsin.

Black, with all the efforts on their part, could not achieve this. Memories of the all-powerful TWG soon dissipated like morning mist.

7.

The story of the fantastic rise and then collapse of the empire of the Cherny brothers is the most colorful, but by no means is not the only evidence that a generation

Veteran entrepreneurs left a noticeable mark on the modern economy of the countries - the heirs of the USSR. Many of them managed to build not just a scheme, but their own sustainable "business". For example, Vladimir Melnikov, the owner of Gloria Jeans, the largest Russian manufacturer of children's jeans.

The first time Melnikov sat in 1969 for the currency. Then he was still a student of the history department of Rostov State University. Received

five years in a general regime colony. After serving, he again took up the same business. The result was another term. This time, two years.

During perestroika, Melnikov created a sewing cooperative, and things seemed to go uphill. But in 1989, the cooperator was detained at customs with undeclared

dollars. It seems that he wanted to spend them on the purchase of foreign sewing equipment. But the Soviet court did not go into the details of the case of the recidivist foreign exchange dealer and gave another term. Melnikov was released only in 1992.

Since then, he has been in the clothing business. Today, Gloria Jeans includes more than a dozen garment factories, the largest of which is located in Novoshakhtinsk (Rostov Region), and more than 300 branded stores in Russia and Ukraine. The annual turnover is about 7 billion rubles.

There are a lot of those who traded in commerce back in Soviet times and among the owners of small and medium enterprises. Do you remember Sergei Rabinovich, a Moscow guild worker who made jeans and tracksuits for a living? He is still doing the same thing. Sews. Only now not underground, but quite legally. He does not have a factory, but rather a workshop. He does not drive consumer goods, but makes a limited number of expensive things for a narrow circle of customers. Everything is the same as it was then - in the 80s: "We are doing well, this is a firm", and not some kind of self-made."

Generation of Soviet entrepreneurs left a noticeable footprint in modern economy of the countries - heirs of the USSR. Many of them succeeded build your own sustainable "case".

And, as they say, in the end, I will tell the most optimistic story about the guild workers that I managed to collect. Through acquaintances, I found a married couple in Dnepropetrovsk. Their names are, say, Mark and Olga. Mark's father took work home even under Soviet rule. I did this in the 60s and 70s. He brought leather and blanks for soles from the shoe factory where he worked. He waxed the thread, pulled the blanks on the blocks and sewed shoes. Then he rented them to merchants

The son got a job at the same factory. And he also took raw materials and components there. The only difference was that now he did not sew at home, but hired workers right there, in the workshops, to produce additional products. He exported shoes to sell on the market - in Dnepropetrovsk, Kyiv, Rostov, Donetsk.

This is how everyone lived around. Dnepropetrovsk, about 6% of the population of which were Jews, was one of the largest centers of underground production in the Union. Naturally, many of the wealthy citizens are sick of such a semi-legal life. In the late 80s and early 90s, many of their acquaintances left, Mark recalls. Someone in Israel, someone in the US. "Some of them lived like on suitcases for the last five or six years before leaving," Mark chuckles. "Everything in the house is packed in boxes, only the dishes in the kitchen are not folded, but a minimum of things." But practically everyone returned," Olga interrupts.

Well, Mark and Olga themselves - why didn't they leave? As it was not before. Just bought an apartment in the 90s. All the money collected by that time was spent on it - 15,000 rubles. Then they were allowed to do business legally. Harnessed. And so it has continued ever since. The first time we really rested only a couple of years

back — went to Madeira. And so - no weekends, no days off.

They have their own small factory. 12 workers, production - several thousand pairs of shoes per year. On each pair, Mark performs some of the most important operations. Talking about it, he shows his hands, all in calluses. Olga, also a former employee of the same shoe factory, is engaged in design. I have just returned from Turkey, where, under the guise of a representative of one of the Dnipropetrovsk trading companies, I visited the showrooms of local manufacturers. I looked at the price level and what will be fashionable in the coming season.

Sitting in a restaurant, we have time to drink two hundred grams. Mark talks about his school friend, who already owned three cars in the mid-80s: "You, Misha, can't even imagine now what it meant to have three cars back then!" An acquaintance of Mark earned money on speculation, food trade. Went to the States. He served several times in an American prison. The last time was for fraudulent medical insurance for four years, after which he was expelled from the country. Now in Dnepropetrovsk, toiling, nothing special can be done.

Those who left are, for the most part, experts at exploiting weaknesses in the system," says Mark. Here they succeeded. They were serious people. And in the new place somehow it didn't work out very well. Someone invested in construction, someone tried to engage in the production of automotive components - but all without much success. Almost everyone returned. But it's too late. Everything is divided here. You had to stay and do what you know how to do - here is his summary.

Well, how are things going with shoes now, I ask, is it worse or better than under the Soviet regime? "Of course it was easier then," Mark chuckles in response. There was a terrible shortage of shoes, people paid money to get a job as a loader in a factory - "take out" shoes. Whatever you do, everything is for sale. Now the demand is not the same, the margin is completely skinny. Cheap shoes are brought in from China and Turkey. Large retail chains twist their arms - give them a large assortment so that there are dozens of types of shoes. And Mark, with his two thousand pairs a year, simply cannot afford to constantly launch new models into production. Well, as for underground business or not... Now there are enough risks too. Mark, like his father, unfastens the inspectors. Paid firefighters. Pays the tax (except, of course, the taxes themselves). Pays sanitary and epidemiological stations. Everything is the same as in Russia. But life is enough. Large apartment in the center of Dnepropetrovsk. Two decent cars - Lexus and Suba

Now, says Mark, there are almost a hundred like us, small producers, in the city. These are either former guild workers or resellers who took shoes from us. The factory where Mark and Olga once worked went bankrupt. And what are the prospects for the family business? Mark does not want to take loans and increase the scale of production: "Why do I need this? I have enough money. I'm minding my own business. Found my place. I like".

8.

That's probably all. Where did they go? Some, like the Cherny brothers, became for a short moment very influential and famous. Then they vanished into oblivion. dozens,

Chapter XI. **What happened to them?**

perhaps hundreds of them now own fairly large companies in the countries of the former USSR. Others are engaged in business less obscure and less remarkable. Many simply stopped being undertaking

mothers.

In the late 80s, when Victor Sokirko organized his "Society for the Protection of Convicted Business Executives and Economic Freedoms", the future of the contemporary entrepreneurial class was seen differently. It seemed that enough

to renew Soviet repressions against the private trader, like hundreds thousands, if not millions of people will

be engaged in honest, creative work for the sake of their own good and for the good of society. That did not happen. Foundations of the New Entrepreneurial Estate

did not come out of the workshops.

And it would be nice if the speculators, swindlers, pushers chi and all those who were fed, parasitizing on the inefficiency of the Soviet system of distribution of goods, would disappear. Prosperity bypassed those who actually produced something. He could replace the collapsed Soviet plants and factories with the release of his products. The story of Mark and Olga is not a frequent exception. Those who were ready to work with their own hands, to produce things useful for people, were not many among the underground Soviet entrepreneurs. Even fewer of them "survived", kept the business in the turbulent 90s and in the subsequent period of stability.

More depressing, however, is that they are also in the minority among the next generation of businessmen.

Either decades of Soviet power, or centuries of

Basics of the new
entrepreneurial
estates from the guilds
didn't work out.

of the lean state are to blame, but the spirit of entrepreneurship, the thirst for independent business, still remain the lot of a miserable 5-10% of the population. And there are even fewer of those who are ready to offer goods and services that are in demand on a competitive market. More often than not, a modern

business, as in
old (or now
not so old?) mode - behaves

respectively -
solves problems
with offerings,
embedded in
corruption schemes,
looking for a roof.

successful businessman is a person who has fine-tuned the scheme for pumping out state money.

And how is it different from the old guilds? At the same time, the state and officials today, like thirty, fifty years ago, perceive entrepreneurs either as an alien element or as a milch herd. And business, just like under the old (or now not so old?) regime, behaves accordingly – it solves problems with the help of offerings, gets involved in corruption schemes, and looks for a “roof”. Ready, if anything, for “landing”. And he dreams, having made his capital, to go to countries with a more friendly business climate.

Will the situation change in the future? Who knows. But there are no great grounds for optimism.

Convicted, given 13 years. Semip latyn was taken from the prison to penitentiary colony 35. From there in two months - to Kyzyl-Orda. And then to Mangyshlak. To zone 64, in Novy Uzen, in the desert sands. And then the terrible 23 processing zone. More on this next time. I will continue this manuscript. And then I will call its second part “DEAD ZONE”.

Notes of a Soviet Broker by Mark Sherman